

Gloria Dialectic

She dedicated her career to helping society's most vulnerable citizens.

Chapter 01 - 1:00

Introduction

Announcer: Through her work in several social agencies, Dr. Gloria Dialectic has made major contributions to the quality of life in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After earning her Ph.D. in English from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, she found her way to Tulsa in the late seventies.

Her entry into Tulsa social work was as an intern in psychotherapy with the Tulsa Psychiatric Center. Gloria went on to become the Helpline casework supervisor, the executive director of Call Rape, the case manager for the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless, and for many years she has served on the board of directors for the Tulsa Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Over the years she has shared her experience by teaching various classes at Tulsa Community College. Among her many honors she has received the Tulsa Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women Award (now the Pinnacle Award) for Public Advocacy, and Goodwill Industries presented her with the Tulsa Community Partner award.

Listen to Gloria talk about her very interesting journey on the oral history website VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 02 - 9:03

Education

John Erling: My name is John Erling. Today's date is February 8, 2017. Gloria, will you state your full name, please?

Gloria Dialectic: My name is Gloria Dialectic.

JE: Do you have middle names?

GD: I dropped my middle name.

JE: You dropped your middle name?

GD: When I changed my last name.

JE: Tell us that story.

GD: Okay, the story is that I was married for twenty years. And when I was divorced I had sort of become a different person, perhaps. I felt that my ex-husband's name was no longer appropriate, but to go back to my father's name after twenty years wasn't realistic either.

So I felt the time has come to create my own name. And so I named myself Dialectic, which encompasses my philosophy, my worldview as a dialectical one.

JE: Tell us the meaning of that word, dialectic.

GD: Well, that could be a long story. It's a term used in philosophy, the way I look at it and the way it sort of evolves into a historical term, dialectical materialism. Basically, the dialectic looks at life and at truth as continuing interaction of opposite equals.

JE: Right.

GD: That is irreducible, irreducible.

JE: Yeah. And—

GD: These are not opposites such as good and evil, it is not that kind of opposition.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

GD: It's an opposition of equals such as high tide and low tide.

JE: You had a lot of people say, "Dialectic? Oh, what—"

GD: Well, people who know the word give an amused smile, they're delighted. They say, "Really?"

And I say, "Yes."

Okay, like Dave Barry, the comedian, when I wrote something to him and I signed my name and he said, "Really?" But other people say, "Ooooh, you're going to have to spell it for me," because they're totally intimidated by it.

JE: Your date of birth?

GD: 3/11/32.

JE: March 11, '32, so your present age?

GD: Eighty-four.

JE: And you'll be eighty-five ...?

GD: In March.

JE: In the incoming month of March. Tell us where we're recording this interview.

GD: We're recording this in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at my home, which is presently an assisted living at a place called The Park Assisted Living.

JE: Where were you born?

GD: Allentown, Pennsylvania, is my hometown.

JE: Your mother's name and her maiden name and where she was born and came from?

GD: Well, my mother's name is Violet Agnes Noggle was her maiden name. And she was also born in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

JE: What kind of a person was she?

GD: She was a housewife, as so many women were in those days. She was a person born into a family of thirteen children. Her father died when she was a teenager. And it fell upon her to leave school after eleven grades and go to work in the hosiery factory to help support the younger children in the family. So she never got a chance to continue high school. She never learned to drive. So her life was, as was the life of many people in those days, she had five children and she was married to the same man until the day she died. It was a very different life from mine.

JE: Your father's name?

GD: My father's name is a biblical name, Ammon, A-m-m-o-n, Ammon Clinton Roth. He was also born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, of German extraction.

JE: What kind of a person was he and what did he do?

GD: He was a salesman and the greatest part of his life he worked for an automotive distribution company. He traveled around within the local area to garages and new car dealerships and so forth, and he sold them all the equipment they needed in their shop.

JE: So then you've alluded to already, brothers and sisters.

GD: Yes, I have one brother who is my oldest sibling, and then there were four of us girls. I am the fourth one, and as I came to realize, which sort of was an insight for me about my own personality because my brother was born first. And then there was a sister and then there was a sister. And on this fourth try they were definitely aiming for a male. And I came along instead.

But it is my brother who most affected my life and on whose life I modeled my own. My brother has a PhD, as I do. And the other siblings never went to college. My brother is divorced, as I am, and the other siblings stayed loyal to their husbands.

JE: Are they all still living?

GD: No. My oldest sister died a number of years ago. And then my second sister, I'm sorry to say, is living in a memory unit in Allentown, Pennsylvania. So we sort of lost her as she's no longer capable of being aware of her life.

My youngest sister lives in Florida, she's still very active.

JE: Since there were two PhDs in the family—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...were your parents great promoters of education?

GD: Well, neither of them had college educations but they were definitely promoters of it. I don't know about my siblings, about why they decided not to go to school. It's almost as if we had two families there, my brother and me, more modeled on my father, and my three

sisters, more modeled on my mother. Although I shouldn't say that because my sister, I think, would have lived a very different life had she been born in a different order or in a different year because she was very bright. But she never pursued a college degree.

JE: Now you're an Oklahoman, so let's follow your life—

GD: All right.

JE: ...leading out—

GD: Up to it.

JE: ...to becoming an Oklahoman.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: We can just jump to your education. Your high school, when did you graduate?

GD: I was graduated in 1950, from William Allen High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

JE: Well, let me come back to 1941, December 7, Pearl Harbor Day.

GD: Oh, yes.

JE: Do you have a recollection of that day?

GD: I have—

JE: That was on a Sunday and you—

GD: Yes, I remember that day.

JE: Do you remember family—

GD: I can't say too much about the actual day. But as the war developed, I was in a school that was a very old school, and we went into the basement where there were actually like vaults, arched vaults, and that's where we were supposedly going to protect ourselves against attacks.

But I remember the day that Roosevelt died.

JE: Tell us about that.

GD: I—I wasn't too aware about politics at that time, but I know we spoke in hushed tones, you know, around the dinner table. And to think of what that meant.

JE: So you went on to college?

GD: Yes I went on. After high school, I went to a college in Allentown, Pennsylvania, a women's college, named Cedar Crest College. I went there for two years. Then I had decided I would really like to be married, so I dropped out after two years.

My husband was finishing off his last two years at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

So I went to work for the telephone company as a service representative for a year and a half before I became pregnant with my son. So the idea was that sooner or later I would go back to school. Of course, when we went to my father to ask if we could get married, my father was disappointed that I wasn't going to finish school.

I said, "Oh, I'm going to go back, I'm going to go back."

But, of course, he said, "You never will."

JE: Your husband's name?

GD: Edward. Edward Dusinger. So that was my married name.

JE: Right.

GD: Dusinger.

JE: And then you had children?

GD: And then I had a son, Mark, and a daughter, Faye.

JE: So then you were a housewife, you were a mother for a number of years.

GD: Yes, yes.

JE: When did you go back to school?

GD: Ten years later, both my children were going to school all day, which was my idea. I wanted to go back to school full time, taking a full course load rather than take a course here and a course there. So I waited for ten years, they were both in school all day, and then I went back to school full time.

JE: You would have been about thirty years old then, I think.

GD: Yes!

JE: About 1961.

GD: Actually, '60 in the fall. And then it was the class year '61.

JE: And what was the college?

GD: I went to Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Muhlenberg had been only a male school when I first went to college, but it had become coed. So I felt that I would get a better education at Muhlenberg than going back to Cedar Crest.

Chapter 03 - 4:45

Pursuing Her PhD

John Erling: You get through Lehigh?

Gloria Dialectic: Yes. When I went back to Muhlenberg, of course I was still married and had the two children, and so my idea was that I would take the courses necessary to teach in high school. And then that would work out with the family's school schedule and so forth. So I did take those classes. But I was doing so well that I won a National Defense Education Act fellowship to get a PhD, which I hadn't planned on when I first went back to school. But that was a nice plum.

I'm amused that the government paid for me to have a PhD because I haven't repaid the government for their investment in me. It was very interesting what we did around that fellowship because Sputnik had knocked us all for a loop—Russia was ahead of us.

So Congress passed this Act to try to train more people and get them advanced degrees so that we could catch up. I'm amazed that they didn't limit it to science—

JE: Um-hmm (agreement).

GD: ...or engineering or something. It included everything and, of course, many of us who won this award went on then to teach in college and we were responsible for training a lot of people for the future and for the space program and that sort of thing.

JE: It was—

GD: That was the idea.

JE: When we say Sputnik, we should say for historical value—

GD: Yes.

JE: ...what was Sputnik?

GD: Well, the Russians had sent somebody into space and we were nonplussed here in America because we couldn't equal that, at that time.

JE: Well, you get your PhD.

GD: Well, I didn't get it for ten years because I took all of the classes, and then I had to test out in two languages, at least, which I did. And in the meantime, we moved from a house in Allentown, Pennsylvania, out into the countryside into a beautiful home that was built in 1815, a stone home. They called them stone back there; they call them rock homes here. But usually here they're just faced with a certain kind of rock. Back then they were built of stone. And I plunged into that. All my course work was finished and my academic work was finished, but I devoted myself to redoing this house—tearing down the ceilings, tearing up the linoleum that had been pasted over the random-width yellow pine floors and working on this farm. And its beautiful, beautiful buildings.

Then I finally had to buckle down because I was notified that I have only ten years to finally get this degree. But in the meantime, I decided to get divorced. I actually was divorced in 1972, and I got my degree in 1973. I wrote my dissertation, that's what was still needed.

JE: You had to test out in two languages?

GD: Well, in order to get a doctor of philosophy degree, that was part of their regiment that we had to be able to read criticism and history and so forth in two foreign languages.

JE: Doctor of philosophy, but you also had in English.

GD: Well, I have a PhD, which is a doctor of philosophy, and my subject matter is English. But a doctor of philosophy degree is supposed to be modeled on a medieval kind of thing, which nowadays it rarely is. Because you can get a degree in being the head of a community college. I mean, it is no longer a doctor of philosophy, in the larger sense.

I had to take two other courses in graduate school. One, I chose philosophy that related to my area of expertise and interest in English. And then I took one in the history

department as well. History of Europe, that was another requirement so that we have a broader background in the humanities.

JE: School must have come awfully easy for you from the get-go.

GD: Well, I was surprised to find out that that was true. I mean, it was delightful and wonderful because I had had that as ten years sort of being a housewife and mother and planning dinners and that sort of thing. I really didn't know what my capacity was. And when I got to school I had the advantage over the teenagers, you know, who were still busy partying until the night before a test. And, of course, they didn't get around to reading the materials or anything. But I knew what I was there for. I dived into it and really enjoyed it.

Chapter 04 - 4:32

Move to the Ozarks

John Erling: So you get a divorce and you live on this farm?

Gloria Dialectic: Um-hmm (affirmative), yes.

JE: And then?

GD: And then tried to find a job for myself. As I explained, I did pass my orals with distinction, which was the highest possibility. So I want to defend myself in a way that I couldn't get a job, not because I was incompetent or had a poor showing in graduate school—I had an excellent showing.

But, frankly, as I found out, PhDs in English were sort of a dime a dozen at that time. And it was because of the Vietnam War and the draft exclusion that going to graduate school represented. So most graduate schools really expanded their offerings and their programs because they had all these people who were trying to avoid the draft.

So suddenly, there were an awful lot of us looking for the same jobs and I couldn't find one. Anywhere, within fifty, eighty miles of Allentown, PA. I had to find work, you know, now I was divorced and no longer had a husband supporting me, so I made a decision in the '70s, to buy land where it was cheaper in Arkansas, in the Ozarks, and found a women's conference center. That was my plan.

JE: What year are we talking about?

GD: We're talking 1975. And a lot of people were doing the back to the land thing. I started becoming a subscriber of *Mother Earth News* and reading about milking equipment and stuff. I had no intention of going that far, but in that period, a lot of hippies from many different parts of America were buying land and coming in there and they were building

properties, building pole houses, and building outhouses because there was no indoor plumbing, and living in very strange ways, considering what their background was. Many of these were educated.

One friend down the road was an architect. Another friend I would visit through the woods, had his PhD in philosophy and mathematics, and yet we were all there near Huntsville, Arkansas. It was a little community that we gathered together for parties and to do political work. I was very busy there in a fight to outlaw phenoxy herbicides in the area, which were being aerial-sprayed in the Ozarks to kill the deciduous trees so they could have pasture for cattle.

Like, what a dumb idea in the Ozarks, I mean, the cattle would fall off the side of these hills. We had so many ravines and hills and valleys and so forth. But to get them all stripped of their forest so that you could put cattle on them, you know, was just plain impractical.

JE: How far did you get in that opposition?

GD: Well, I would write letters to the editor, and articles. We had a number of community educational lessons, one of which a farmer in overalls told me, “If you know so much, why don’t you go to Washington?”

So I would try to use all the literature I could get a hold of and the statistics and so forth, to try to convince people.

I also did a lot of work with my colleagues going to the courthouse in Madison County. We had to get a petition with the proper number of signatures so that we could put this on the ballot, which we were successful in doing. We had to go and access these giant volumes in the courthouse to research the election numbers. The actual number—every person who registered to vote would have an actual number. And we had to show those on our petition.

We were successful and we did have a petition on which people voted to outlaw phenoxy herbicides in our county. We did not win. We had Tyson chickens against us and State Farm.

JE: And you had limited resources—

GD: Right.

JE: ...to do this. And—

GD: Yeah, this was homespun.

JE: Right, right.

GD: Definitely.

Chapter 05 - 3:46**Gloria Becomes a Hippie**

John Erling: So you're in your forties, about this time?

Gloria Dialectic: Not yet. Not quite yet.

JE: Late thirties?

GD: I'm still in my thirties. Right.

JE: So did you ever consider yourself a hippie? I mean, you had hippies living in this—

GD: Well, I consider that was definitely my hippie period.

JE: All right, it was your hippie—

GD: I had long hair, I had granny glasses. It was interesting. The one thing about it, you might wonder about this woman who was almost forty, but I looked like I was in my twenties. It just happened that way, I don't know how. I managed not to look older.

Actually, I was carded in Pennsylvania when I was forty, in a state liquor store and at a bar. I was actually carded and I thought, "Yikes!" I had to get out my ID card and show them that I was entitled to drink.

JE: They thought you were younger than twenty-one?

GD: Yeah, right. So—

JE: Right.

GD: ...that was definitely my hippie period.

JE: Do you look fondly upon those days?

GD: Very fondly, very fondly, I had a wonderful time.

JE: Yeah.

GD: And I traveled with a group that had such a different social relationship. When I was married, of course, other married couples would have these dinners, sit-down dinners, and we would go to Bear House where these lovely dinners and they would come to my house for lovely dinners.

JE: Right.

GD: But when I got to be a hippie it was all, "Oh, we're having a party tonight," and everybody brings what they had. And we had grandparents there and we had brand new babies. It was such a different relationship among this whole group. It was joyous.

JE: Do you think that those relationships were closer, tighter, better bond than when you lived in so-called America?

GD: Oh, definitely.

JE: And when you were married?

GD: It was a different world.

JE: And maybe as you look back, I don't know, you speak for yourself, maybe you didn't even meet those kind of relationships later on in life.

GD: No I didn't, I never had them again because it never fit properly. Well, one thing, I wasn't married.

JE: Yeah.

GD: And I had a boyfriend. I think I had a transformation during this period. Coming about with what I was studying and with my change in worldview based on the philosophy and the literature of the romantics. English and American romantics.

JE: Okay, so how long did you live there as a hippie, I'll say?

GD: I lived there three years and I was trying to get this women's conference center going. I advertised in some different women's magazines about what I was trying to do.

One woman came to stay with me for a couple of days, but what we realized was none of us had the money that would be necessary to build the facility that we wanted to build. And there weren't really jobs around the Huntsville area that we could support ourselves while we pulled it together.

And so I learned that there was going to be a presentation in Eureka Springs one Saturday, about bioenergetics analysis, but it was given by a person who was employed at the Psychiatric Center in Tulsa. And he told me about an internship in psychotherapy at the Psychiatric Center.

So I came over for a group interview the following March. We had a group interview, which was very, very interesting how that was handled. And I was selected to be part of this class of six interns. The class began—it was a year-long internship. We were paid five thousand dollars. We were given health insurance and plenty of free psychotherapy and education and seven Rs and so forth. It started the day after Labor Day in 1978.

JE: Let me—

Chapter 06 - 1:32

A Feminist

John Erling: Let me take you back before then as you were in Huntsville, Arkansas.

Gloria Dialectic: Okay.

JE: In the mid '70s. Feminism.

GD: Yes.

JE: To be a feminist came into vogue about that time.

GD: Oh yes, that was the second wave.

JE: So were you a feminist?

GD: Well, yes, I mean, it was—

JE: Did you identify yourself as one?

GD: Yes. There wasn't any question about it.

JE: Tell us what that meant?

GD: Well, actually, the great critic, Bell Hooks, tells us that feminism is not a role, you know, like I am a feminist. Because she sells feminism is really the struggle to end sexist oppression. So if you support that struggle, if you engage in the struggle to end sexist oppression, then you are living feminism, you're doing feminism. She prefers that you're actually do it rather than a role to say, "I am a feminist." That is not linked to being a man or a woman or any specific thing, if you're engaged in the struggle to end sexist oppression. So I like that definition.

JE: But the term, feminist, has been a contentious term.

GD: Oh yes, yes.

JE: Maybe the term militancy would be attached to it or anti-men could be attached to it?

GD: Yes, yes. There was a lot of struggle over that.

JE: So that would have been then a misunderstanding of what you were trying to do.

GD: Absolutely. Yes.

JE: Everybody around you then was considered in the same thinking that was—

GD: Well, yes, I would certainly seek out people who had that same enlightenment.

Chapter 07 - 7:23

Rheumatoid Arthritis

John Erling: Somewhere in your forties you began to notice symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

Gloria Dialectic: Yes.

JE: Tell us how that came about.

GD: Well, it was in my late thirties, possibly it was earlier than that, I'm just trying to remember because I taught for a year at Muhlenberg College before I had my PhD. I already had a master's degree, but I taught there for a year. I was filling somebody's leave of absence. So the head of the department called me up and said, "Do you want to do this?" Which I was totally delighted to do, it was a wonderful experience.

And it was in 1970 and '71, that I was already feeling the results of arthritis. As that decade went by and I was living on the farm and getting up every day and pulling on my paint clothes, I was using my arms and my shoulders and everything in a way that I often

went to bed aching. What was the clue that something was going on was I would go out in the morning after the kids got up and went to school, they were teenagers by this time, I would go out and feed the horses and I noticed that my foot hurt. I thought I had something in my shoe or I thought I had a callus. And then as the day would go by, I didn't feel it anymore.

And then the next morning I'd be going out there and I'd say, "Ew, there that is again." I went to my doctor. At this time, my hands were beginning to swell. My symptoms were first in the bones of my feet, that's where it first manifested itself. And so at that time, what you did is you took aspirin.

JE: Aspirin?

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Everybody could have arthritis—

GD: Yes.

JE: ...and there's arthritis—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...but then there's rheumatoid arthritis.

GD: Yeah, well, rheumatoid arthritis is a systemic autoimmune disease. It's different from osteoarthritis, that just happens because of wear and tear as we get older. I was still married at that time. I couldn't move my wedding band, so my doctor sawed off my wedding band and I walked out of there feeling an unusual freedom. It was so interesting.

JE: Is that what led to divorce?

GD: I must have been feeling on a pretty deep level that I was out of this marriage because I walked out, like singing, that my wedding band was sawed off and it wasn't around my finger anymore. But I—

JE: Yet you were fighting this illness?

GD: And, yes. So at first, I didn't realize what it would entail and what would happen. When I lived in Arkansas there was a period when it was really aggravated. I couldn't lift my hands to comb my hair. I could no longer drive my car because it was a stick shift. I was really in desperate shape.

In those days, there were very few remedies.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

GD: Very few remedies.

JE: You said you took aspirin. Eventually, you had to do something more for it than aspirin.

GD: Oh yes. Oh yes. Well, aspirin is an anti-inflammatory and, of course, arthritis is an inflammatory disease, so that would be obvious. Then later, different Nsaids were developed, you know, non steroidal anti-inflammatory, so I would take those, each one in sequence.

When I was finally over here in Tulsa, I went to the rheumatoid arthritis clinic, which was part of OU Health Sciences. I tried gold salts injections, that was one of the things they tried. They had no idea why this would do anything but some people got better.

JE: Say that again, what was it?

GD: Gold salts injections. It was actually salt form of gold.

JE: Okay.

GD: They were grasping at straws.

JE: Yeah.

GD: The only reason they were giving those to you, they had no idea why they would work, but it seemed to work for some people. Of course, for other people it didn't work at all. It didn't work for me but I took those for years.

What finally saved me, which didn't come about until the 1990s, was a medicine that was built on science in that they realized this disease was caused by your own immune system running amok. So the idea is to take a medicine that cuts down on your own immune system, suppresses the production of white blood cells that led us into a whole new way of dealing with rheumatoid arthritis.

JE: We should also point out, it's more than pain because—

GD: It's disfigurement.

JE: ...as I can see your fingers here today.

GD: Yes.

JE: Describe them.

GD: Well, what it does is it gets into every joint and the body, sensing that there's inflammation present, sends white blood cells to cope with that. And white blood cells instead of doing what they're supposed to do, they actually break open and suffuse the joint with the enzymes that dissolve the inflammatory agent that they're supposed to be getting rid of.

But instead of taking the agent into a capsule and dissolving it—that is the job of a white blood cell—they burst loose and just suffuse the joint itself, so it eats away at the bone, it eats away at the cartilage in every joint. I've had surgery on my hands, on my fingers, on both feet, on my knee. Right now, I could qualify for knee replacements on both my knees, which are totally ruined, and my shoulders. But I'm too old, I don't want to do that. And so I'm not doing it.

JE: And this so impressed because we're going to talk about a lot of the great work you did, this is going on. Did the—

GD: This is going on.

JE: Did it get you down, did it depress you, or did—

GD: Yes.

JE: ...the mission overcome the depression?

GD: Yes.

JE: How did that work?

GD: Well, I would be depressed, especially when it was so grievous when I was living in Arkansas. I tried the instructions in this book called *There Is a Cure for Arthritis*, which was really not any kind of jazzy new medicine, it was actually based on diet. I did juice fasts for a week, once a month. I also severely reduced eating anything made of flour or sugar. So I lost a lot of weight, and I got better.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound). Did you inherit this?

GD: No.

JE: Did anybody—

GD: Well, my daughter has inherited it. What you inherit, I guess, is a possibility or a propensity. It doesn't mean that everyone whose parent has it is going to develop it, but it is one of your possibilities.

JE: But your daughter has it also?

GD: My daughter has it. However, she began with it at a time when there were these wonderful medicines that suppress your immune system. These are called remittive agents. They don't just deal with the pain like a painkiller, or an anti-inflammatory agent, they get right at the cause of the illness. So she could start right in with those medications and try to avoid all the distortions in the joints that are the heritage of rheumatoid arthritis.

Chapter 08 - 8:37

Helpline and Call Rape

John Erling: So you moved on from reproductive services?

Gloria Dialectic: Yes. I moved on because Helpline was taken over by the Community Service Council, became full-time, and became much more organized.

JE: And Helpline was?

GD: It's a twenty-four-hour crisis telephone line, suicide prevention, and information and referral.

JE: We have to give our good friend David Bernstein credit here, don't we?

GD: Absolutely. Yes, at Community Service Council.

JE: And David Bernstein's interview is on VoicesofOklahoma.com.

GD: Uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: He actually went to California, viewed how this worked—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...brought it back, and set it up and introduced it to Tulsa.

GD: Right, right. It's a great resource.

JE: There are many angels in our community who don't get a lot of credit.

GD: Right.

JE: You said you worked there?

GD: I worked there as casework supervisor and I developed the Resource Guide, which at that time was not a computer but was actually a card file. I developed the taxonomy under which everything was arranged and used that same taxonomy to edit the *Blue Book of Social Services in Tulsa*, two different times.

JE: Did you ever say to yourself, "I got a PhD in English and this is what I'm doing?"

GD: Yes. But so many things tied in. I helped with educating the volunteers there and things like active listening and so on. I would use all of my knowledge, from whatever source.

JE: Then let's move on from Helpline to what next?

GD: The next thing was Call Rape, which was the rape crisis agency here in town. I had some friends who were on the board there and who had helped develop it. They were getting pretty desperate because things were falling apart. Just a small number of people remained as the volunteers and a small number remained as board members. So my friends were determined that they were going to get me to be the executive director and then everything would be saved.

So they promised each other that they would stay on the board until Gloria came in, and then they could feel to resign, which they did. But they are still my friends today.

JE: I believe the, should we call it "rape crisis movement" begins in the '70s.

GD: I would say in the '60s and '70s.

JE: And this was all kind of becoming more public and breaking the silence of rape.

GD: Right.

JE: We were talking about it in hushed tones but it was time to be more vocal about it.

GD: Yes, and it was definitely an expression of feminism that the feminists realized what was going on with each other, what things we were suffering in private, such as rape, domestic violence, and so many things that women had been subject to for years and years, hundreds of years. So they set out, definitely a grassroots thing.

They would start an organization, they would be the workers, they would be the board members, they would be the fundraisers, they would put in all their own money to make it happen. It's amazing across the country how what's called the "rape crisis movement" and the "domestic violence movement" have proceeded. And now are totally mainstream. Laws have been changed. Police have been educated. Judges have been educated, and so forth. But a very different story from when we began.

JE: It was in '74, the federal government funded Pittsburgh Action Against Rape. This was the first time that the federal government provided financial aid to a rape center.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: It also began to treat, in this case, mostly women as victims.

GD: Right.

JE: And they were victims. Wasn't there the thought, the thought may continue today, "Well, what was she wearing?"

GD: Yes, of course.

JE: "What did she say?"

GD: Right.

JE: "Was it consensual?"

GD: Yes, right.

JE: All those questions had to be thrown out immediately—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...to find out whether this was a legitimate rape or not.

GD: And how about this one? "Was she married to the man?" Like a married woman saying, "My husband raped me," wasn't even a concern, you know.

JE: They'd say, "Well, he was married."

GD: You signed up for that when you got married. It was amazing, there wasn't a definition of marital rape. Didn't exist.

JE: And we've come a long way—

GD: A long way.

JE: ...in that. Although I will say, I saw a video the other day, and I think it actually comes out of the world of sports, snippets of about seven or eight men who said, "We need to speak up. We need to defend. We need to protect. We need to respect. Together we can change the culture."

So here we are in 2017—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...we're still trying to change the culture.

GD: Right.

JE: That's being taught today.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: Here we started talking about it in the mid '70s.

GD: Very seriously in the '70s.

JE: And we're still having to deal with it.

GD: I know. There was a great film that Call Rape owned that I would trot around with and show. It was a wonderful spokesperson and he used a lot of material that was done on

college campuses as his factual basis. It ends with, "It's mostly men who are raping and we're the ones who are going to have to stop it." It was a man talking to men.

But then you just open the newspaper or you turn on your TV and here's some sports star who thinks he's entitled to having sex with anybody who is lucky enough to go out with him. I mean, it's just this attitude of power and control. It's shocking that it's still going on.

JE: And changes to the point where the victim had to have physically resisted the attacker.

GD: Yes, and how do you prove that?

JE: Right.

GD: And the majority of rapes are really what you call "date rape" or "acquaintance rape." That is the majority of rapes. Those didn't even used to get on the radar. If you weren't walking along and have somebody jump out of an alley or out of the bushes, don't even talk about it, don't even call that rape. But so many women were, and still are, especially in the college age group and setting, victims of sexual assault.

JE: And legislation also protected women with disabilities who would not have the strength to fight off an attacker.

GD: Yes.

JE: The rape shield laws also came into effect where a woman's background or sexual—

GD: Is private.

JE: ...life—

GD: Yes, right.

JE: ...did not have anything to do with the lead up—

GD: No.

JE: ...to that rape.

GD: Yeah, right. But that was a choice thing for the attorney on the defendant's side to look up that she'd had a lover or whatever, and that was then just used against her.

JE: You were quoted nationally too, there was a book, *Rape on the Public Agenda: Feminism and the Politics of Sexual Assault*.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And I only bring it up because when I was looking for your name you were quoted in the book.

GD: Well, that book came out then later. There's a book on rape that was done by, I think, Susan Brown Miller, which was before this one. And that's a really powerful one. That one lined it up as it was used during wars and so on throughout the centuries, and really put it all together in one book, this whole idea of rape. I don't know what the subtitle of that book was.

JE: You know, this is a comment on the community of Tulsa.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

- JE:** I had been in town several years, the Call Rape representative came to visit me.
- GD:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** And they were doing a fund drive. So we raised thousands and thousands of dollars—
- GD:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** ...on successive years, as a matter of fact.
- GD:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** And I only mention that because the community was beginning to understand it and they were—
- GD:** Yes.
- JE:** ...contributing and they knew—
- GD:** Yes.
- JE:** ...what Call Rape was about.
- GD:** Um-hmm (affirmative).
- JE:** So it's a comment on the community, they wanted to help.
- GD:** Yes.
- JE:** I don't know, at that time it was ten, fifteen, twenty thousand dollars we raised.
- GD:** Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).
- JE:** For Call Rape.
- GD:** Excellent. I'm sure that allowed it to keep going because it was not a United Way agency until I brought into the United Way. That gives it a certain cache, as far as the community insisting that this is a necessary service.
- JE:** Right.
- GD:** Today it is part of Domestic Violence Intervention Service. It no longer exists as a separate agency; it was merged after I left.

Chapter 09 - 11:33

Domestic Violence

John Erling: So when you left, then where did you go?

Gloria Dialectic: I left, frankly, because I was in a bad state physically. My rheumatologist said that I have to stop working for the meantime. I was under a great deal of stress. And I took time off.

JE: So you had been at Call Rape for five to six years?

GD: Six years, um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You took time off, but then you got involved again.

GD: Okay, then, thank goodness, I was on a new medication that was what I'm calling a remittive agent and it was really a life saver because I could live without pain and disability. I still had all the remnants of the disability over the decades, but as far as my day to day feeling and my day to day ability I was living as if I didn't have rheumatoid arthritis. And I was still very young, in that I could start working when I was almost sixty-five and work until I was seventy-nine and a half, as a mental health case manager at the day center for the homeless.

JE: Somehow I have you going to domestic violence, working for—

GD: No, I worked with domestic violence, I did not work for them. In Oklahoma, rape crisis and domestic violence went hand in hand. I was part of the Oklahoma Coalition on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. We all went to the same meetings, then the Department of Mental Health became the state agency that would serve domestic violence and sexual assault.

JE: All right, let's talk a little bit about that area of domestic violence. These are today's numbers, "Each year two million injuries and thirteen hundred deaths are caused as a result of domestic violence. Every nine seconds a woman in the United States is the victim of domestic violence, ages eighteen to thirty-four are at the greatest risk."

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And, of course, it has long term effects in many areas, impacting a woman's mental health, physical health. But let's not let me talk about it but you talk about it.

GD: Well, as a matter of fact, I worked very closely and the topics that were brought up in our meetings and the books that we read and the films that we saw and the laws that we tried to change, and so forth, were very closely tied between rape crisis and domestic violence. It turns out that the end of this past year I decided that I wanted to volunteer in the community, so I have taken the training to be a volunteer for domestic violence. And I just recently went through their in-person training and nine and a half hours of online training, which is very extensive in every area.

We think of just domestic violence, but the materials now, it's really developed to such an extent that there's separate information that you want to master with the domestic violence of the elderly, domestic violence of those who are immigrants who may not have status in the United States, those who may be in the, let's see, what is it? Lesbi—

JE: LBGT.

GD: Yeah, in that community where it goes on, unfortunately, just as well.

I went last week to observe where I'm going to do my volunteer service. I'm going to do it at the Family Safety Center, which is in the Police Courts building, and where people come to fill out their paperwork to get a protective order.

JE: We should state again, you're doing this today and you're eighty-four years old.

GD: Yes.

JE: And you're out there volunteering and wanting to be involved.

GD: Yes.

JE: A little bit about domestic violence itself. Somebody in the family commits a domestic violence case, they think this is just part of arguing in a marriage.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative), yes.

JE: So they don't identify it as abuse. Can you talk about that?

GD: Well, domestic violence is all about power and control. And once you see that, it all falls into place. The perpetrator is set upon telling the victim that it's because of the victim's behavior, which is provoking and so on, or it's about the victim's lack of abilities to make meals or to keep the house clean or something.

The purpose of the perpetrator is, of course, to conceal that this is all about power and control. Victims get to believe this and get to doubt their own innocence in domestic violence, which is, of course, what the perpetrator wants to convince her of. You know, "If you only would do this," or "If you wouldn't do that I wouldn't have to behave this way. I wouldn't have to explode this way. But, you know, you do this wrong and you do that wrong." And finally it just erodes the woman's self-esteem to a dangerous degree.

It's called *learned helplessness*. The woman starts out, of course, being wooed and swept off her feet by these guys who often are very charming. Now I'm not talking thugs and poor, uneducated people; I'm talking about doctors and lawyers, educated people who are still involved in power and control. And that's what it is when you slice it, it's going to be about power and control.

It manifests itself in many different forms. There's this wheel of violence that they use in their education and in talking to victims about the many ways you can go about doing this. One is, to cut people off from her, cut a woman off from her family and her longtime friends, of course, because they could give her reassurance. And he wants to isolate her and have her under his control.

Another way that this is shown is when the woman finally takes steps to assert her own freedom and her own capability that's when it's most dangerous because the loss of that control often provokes murder.

We've certainly heard the stories of the men who come to a woman's workplace and shoot her right in front of her coworkers. That's another thing, they not only cut them off and they never go visit, like a family visit to the family, but they also prefer that you not work outside the home because that gives too much possibility that she could be around other people and do work that actually boosts her ego so that she will no longer be believing him and be so thoroughly under his thumb.

JE: Terms like "wife abuse," "wife beating," and—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...“battery” were used.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: But I don't think used as much now because this is an effort to include unmarried partners.

GD: Of course.

JE: So it exists, obviously.

GD: And, of course, it could be a gay person being abused by a gay lover.

JE: So the ramifications of this—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...children can visit and see it and not like it—

GD: Oh.

JE: ...but maybe children can also grow up to become an abuser.

GD: That's right. And they learn certain things quite unconsciously, I'm sure, when they're very young, if they witness this kind of behavior—the father against the mother.

If you go to the shelter and use the shelter, a son over the age of twelve is not allowed to come to the shelter with the mother. But you can see the young boys, like five years old, if their mother tells them, you know, “You're not going to have any more cake,” or “You have to go to bed now,” or something, that they want to hit the mother, put her down. And that's just picked up from what they have observed.

So it's very dangerous for the children. The perpetrator might not be directly abusing the children, although that often comes into it, but it's very dangerous for children to witness that kind of behavior.

JE: Then there's a class where men are abused.

GD: Oh yes!

JE: And they don't want to report it because—

GD: Right, right.

JE: ...they're manly.

GD: It doesn't look manly.

JE: Right.

GD: Same thing with rape. I had a number of male rape clients when I worked for—

JE: And they came to you?

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: The stories you have heard, you could write a book, couldn't you?

GD: Oh, I'm sure. Anyone who works in the field could do so because the stories are there and they're very moving.

JE: So have we come a long ways in terms of rape, how we deal with it, domestic violence from say the mid '70s, early '80s, to today?

GD: Yes, yes. Now have we stamped it out? No. But we have come a long way in the fact that it wasn't even recognized in the past. Again and again you hear the stories from the women in the past that they would tell their families about it or they would tell their pastor about it, because there wasn't anybody else to turn to. And they would be told that, "Your job is to obey your husband. And go home and don't make him mad." You know, that was the advice they got.

JE: Right.

GD: Yeah.

JE: Then there's another category of women who kill their attackers.

GD: Yes. That's very rare. I mean, it's rare but it does happen.

JE: But it does happen.

GD: Yes.

JE: And for a woman to prove she was defending herself is difficult.

GD: Yes it is difficult because of the timing.

JE: The timing?

GD: Well, she did not grab a knife or a gun while the beating was going on, which is usually what is necessary to meet the standard of self-defense. Often the women who do finally get to that point that they can't do anything else but now try to stop this person have been charged then with murder. Because of their great fear of this person, they have to wait until he's immobilized, like he's dead drunk or sound asleep or something, and then try to kill him.

So that got to be a problem as we were putting these women in prison. And there aren't that many of them that actually get to that point. But there have been, and I hope that there are fewer now because there are resources that the person can use.

But when there were no resources and when they went to their own families and their own families told them, "Go back to your husband and behave yourself," and their ministers told them that's what God wants. That was really immobilizing, to say the least.

But now they have much more resources and there are all kinds of things about getting information out there. You know, bulletins on TV, posters, and so on. Like high school counselors and everything that would refer people to the place that they can get help and move on.

JE: Somebody's listening here to our conversation and they need to reach out to somebody.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: What should that person do right now?

GD: They should dial the DVIS Crisis Line, which I'm sorry, I'm don't have memorized. I'm not that a good a volunteer yet. But there is a crisis line twenty-four hours a day that you can certainly start with.

JE: DVIS, meaning Domestic Violence—

GD: Domestic Violence Intervention Services.

JE: Right.

GD: I think they've changed their name to DVIS. So you just have to understand what that acronym stands for.

Chapter 10 - 11:36

Day Center for the Homeless

John Erling: You were also for some time in the Day Center for the Homeless.

Gloria Dialectic: Yes, I worked there for eleven and a half years as a mental health case manager.

JE: You're about sixty-five years old at that time.

GD: Yep, and I worked until I was seventy-nine and a half.

JE: Tell us about the people who are coming to the Day Center for the Homeless.

GD: Oh my, that's a whole other branch that was misunderstood. When I was growing up and in my hometown we had a mission down by the railroad tracks. And you would understand, a person who would be homeless would usually be a man and he was an alcoholic, that's what you thought of it.

But starting with the '70s, and with the policies of the Reagan administration and following there arose a great crisis between the number of affordable housing units and the number of people who needed them. In fact, if you look at charts from the '70s on, the one is a trajectory going up and the other is a trajectory going down, like a giant X. Government policies about housing and building new housing and so forth was changed. And suddenly you began to see people on the streets of cities, lying on pieces of cardboard.

I don't know if you were surprised by that. I remember when I went to Washington, DC, it must have been in the '70s or '80s and I was stunned by people lying on the cement on pieces of cardboard, which they carried with them folded up.

Then we began the homeless shelter system to try to do something about this because now it was not just drunk men, but it was whole families. Whole families that just didn't make enough money to get housing. And then there was no other choice. So it is not a monolithic unit of who is homeless.

I had a client who had a PhD, but he also had mental illness, which he didn't recognize or own up to. He just couldn't function to the level of his education. So he would live in one homeless shelter after another. It was pathetic to see him because he kept using his

skills to try to make a job for himself and try to design something that he could sell to corporations. He was trying very hard to do this, walking around with a briefcase, but it just wasn't practical and it didn't work.

JE: What part of the homeless are there for financial reasons as opposed to those who are mentally ill?

GD: Well, with the mentally ill it's also for financial reasons.

JE: Right, but—

GD: But it's also for reasons that they can't manage in housing. Many of them have some income as social security and a disability or they have SSI, which is supplemental security income through the government. So they might have a regular income but they just haven't been able to maintain.

And I think the statistics vary, but I think you're safe in saying at least 30 percent have major mental illness. Now other ones can have personality disorders, they can have anxiety, and so forth, but it's not to the level of psychosis.

JE: Many of them on the street, they do not want to go to a day center for the homeless.

GD: Yes.

JE: They do not want to be there.

GD: Right. There are those who because of mental illness don't trust others and just don't want to be involved. Because there are rules. There's a certain schedule, you know, you have to be here by this time and you have to do this and do that. They don't want to do that and so some of them live in abandoned buildings. Some of them live in camps. There are always camps springing up here and there, and then the police and the Community Service Council workers go out and try to disperse it and try to get people into shelters. Because it's not only being sheltered, but when they're in the shelter they can work with a case manager with the idea of moving along, having their needs met.

Now their needs might be mental illness, and/or physical illness, and/or substance abuse, and they can't see and they lost their glasses and their teeth are abscessed. You know, many, many issues altogether that can really render a person incapable of functioning.

JE: The general public drives by and they see these people, and so forth.

GD: Right.

JE: There was a woman in South Tulsa, 91st Street area, and she was living outside.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: She was homeless, it seemed.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative), right.

JE: We just never saw that in South Tulsa.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: I drove by, visited with her, and thought, “Well, maybe she needs some help,” and I gave her some money.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So I’m driving around and I come back maybe a week later and I see her there.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And then it dawned on me, “Oh, she has a shopping cart here.”

GD: Um-hmm, um-hmm (affirmatives).

JE: And I thought, “Oh, well, this woman is experienced. She wants to be here.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And when it was forty-some degrees, she still would be out there.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: I quit giving her money—

GD: Yes.

JE: ...because then who could commit her either to an institution or force her to go to the Day Center for the Homeless, which she did not want to go there?

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So here’s a case...

GD: Well, I’m wondering if it’s the same one that later became my client. Because she had a regular area that she lived, it was pretty far south. The people knew her in different restaurants and stores along in there. They would give her food and help her out. She became sort of a project. They knew her and she was severely psychotic.

JE: She had a charming personality back then.

GD: Yeah, she was fine and could talk to you and she was intelligent. If it’s the same one, she had plenty of money. She had a trustee, whose name that I had that I could communicate with, from her family. She just lived like that. There were times that we got her in. We got her in and we got her court ordered to treatment. She got the medicines and so forth. She lived in the shelter for a while.

And as soon as that court order expired, she was out of there.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

GD: Later the same woman, if it’s the one that I’m thinking of, she moved to Colorado, and I spoke to the workers out there that then recognized her from living in different shelters and so on. Really, a very sad case because she was educated, you know, she was upper middle class. But she had severe mental illness, untreated, and that was the result.

JE: And you really can’t place these people in hospitals against their will.

GD: Well, you can but it’s difficult, and then it’s time limited. We don’t have any hospitals that just keep you indefinitely, as in the old days, when people would live in them for twenty

and thirty years. We have nothing like that. We have crisis hospitalization with the idea of then setting up an appointment for you with outpatient treatment.

Now we have had a change recently in the Costello Law last legislative session. Because we have had under our law a mechanism by which a close family member could petition the court by going to court, filling out a petition, and convincing the judge by the evidence presented that this person should be picked up and taken to a center where the person can be evaluated.

The evaluation is very strict. It has to be two mental health professionals, who have to work through all of these different questions. And both of them have to sign off that this person requires treatment. Okay, then they can force the person to stay there in the hospital and be treated for this certain length of time.

That has to be reviewed all the time. And when the person is deemed better and able to go out and live in the community and go to outpatient treatment, then the person is released. Well, often what would happen is they no sooner were released when they would throw away their medication. Many of them were released to the day center; they didn't even bother bringing their medication in there. Or their medication came in with them and went in a drawer and they never took any of it.

Finally, Oklahoma, thanks to this terrible tragedy that happened to the labor secretary and his family, so often these laws are amended and they're named after a certain victim. In New York state you have Rachel's Law, and Kendra's Law, and in California, Julia's Law, and so forth. That happens when there's a terrible tragedy having to do with mental illness.

In this case, it was Oklahoma's labor secretary, and his name was Costello. He had a son; he and his wife struggled with the mental health system here in Oklahoma, trying to get him services repeatedly throughout his adult life. He would be in treatment and then he would be out of treatment and then he'd be in treatment again. So he seemed to be getting better.

And they went out to eat at a local fast food place in Oklahoma City and he drew a knife and killed his father, right in front of his mother. And she has become a crusader.

How awful that it has to happen that way because I have experience. I have a child with major mental illness.

JE: You have a son?

GD: Yeah.

JE: Major mental illness today?

GD: Yes, yes, and I have struggled with getting him hospitalization and so on, with a system that has many holes in it. And is inadequate in many ways. And our legislature just keeps cutting the amount that they have to work with, and it's really a tragedy for families.

But anyway, she managed to get the Oklahoma legislature to pass this change in our law saying, “Okay, now they can be court committed, not only to the hospitalization inpatient, but to outpatient treatment.” Which is what we struggled for, for a long time. I was very active in helping to change the mental health law in Oklahoma and working with the National Alliance for Mental Illness here in Tulsa.

But anyway, this Lew Law will make it possible to continue the court order into the outpatient treatment, so that if they don’t show up, or if they refuse to take their medications and so on, then they can be taken back to the hospital. Which is going to solve one of the major problems of just not following through on the outpatient treatment.

Chapter 11 - 3:30

Equal Rights for Women

John Erling: There’s another that you got involved with, and that’s equal rights for women.

Gloria Dialectic: Oh yes.

JE: I discovered an article from 1986, when that topic was being discussed, the move to add women’s work to the gross national product—

GD: Oh yes.

JE: ...by putting an annual dollar value on the work performed by the house worker. This article from *Morning Call* says, “Gloria Dialectic, a former Allentown resident, Lehigh University graduate, is adamant about counting what women do as part of the gross national product.” You are quoted as saying, “It is totally essential in the industrialized world, Dialectic, who is delegate to the All China Federation of Women and director of Advocacy Counseling Crisis Intervention and Education Center in Tulsa said the work women do bearing children, nurturing them, socializing and educating them is a necessary part of the system. Without this contribution there would be no future workers.”

GD: I think what they’re referring to there with the All China Federation of Women, I was selected by People to People International from among, there were about thirty-one of us feminists, therapists, or counselors to go to China in 1986. We went to many universities and we presented papers. And they presented papers to us. And we went to social service agencies such as Senior Citizen Centers and hospitals for children with physical disabilities and so on and so on. It was an amazing journey, and that’s what they mean about the All China Federation of Women, they’re the ones that invited us to come. And they’re the ones that hosted us around in the different provinces of China.

There was a woman here in Tulsa much more active than I on the Wages for Housework Campaign, which is an international campaign. I got in on it temporarily through this other woman; I wish I could remember her name and give her recognition because she was an amazing person. But that would just be part of the whole feminist movement, of course, to acknowledge women's role, and caring for the elderly, in many cases. It's the wife who takes care of her parents or her husband's parents as they linger and die.

All of this goes unrecognized and you can't be paid for that, you know, by Medicare or anything, if you are a relative just doing that as a kind service. Although if you were a professional and had to come in as a worker you'd be paid incredible salaries.

So it all ties together, there was a big movement in England around that time.

JE: You have donated and worked for so many, many hours—

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: ...you probably donated more of your time than paid time, could be.

GD: Maybe so, maybe so.

JE: It could be equal.

GD: Yes.

JE: And all these causes.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: And here at eighty-four, soon to be eighty-five, you're still continuing on that.

GD: Well, I hope to be doing this and hope to be effective.

JE: So in terms of equal rights for women and equal pay, we're still fighting that.

GD: We're still fighting it.

JE: In 2017. And here you were in '86 talking about it and we're still talking about it in 2017.

GD: Yes, that's right.

JE: Pretty amazing. We've come some ways, I guess.

GD: Yes.

JE: Now we have women who are CEOs of major companies.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So that must make you feel good to know, because that would never have happened in the '70s and '80s.

GD: No, that's true. That's true.

Chapter 12 - 5:15**Black Fox**

John Erling: As you look back on your life, what are you proud of?

Gloria Dialectic: I'm proud of what I was able to accomplish in these various jobs that were in the social services area. Certainly, I could have taken another tack and wound up being a lot more wealthy than I did. But really, I wanted to do what I wanted to do, and work that was meaningful, rather than work my way up a corporation by wearing suits every day and hose and pumps, and behaving in a certain way.

For example, when I first came to Tulsa there was the Sunbelt Alliance, and we were working against Black Fox, if you remember that campaign.

JE: Yes.

GD: Of having PSO build a nuclear plant. I went one day, I was still working as an intern at the psychiatric center. We went to the site and occupied the site. We went the night before and were sleeping in tents, carrying water with us and everything, and we had to go down through a gully and up. And people were holding the fence apart. We crawled in there and we got on the property of PSO. There were quite a few of us and we were divided in the cells and everything. The idea was to make a statement and be on that property and prevent further construction of that property so it could go no further.

I was arrested, as we all were arrested, and we had to process through this. They brought over a tractor trailer they used as their office and we had to all file through and give our names and everything. And we were all arrested. Luckily, there were too many of us for them to take us to jail. But I didn't know how that would fly at the psychiatric center.

JE: What was the lady who headed up that cause?

GD: Yeah, Carrie Dickerson.

JE: Carrie Dickerson.

GD: What a wonderful person.

JE: Yes she was.

GD: She gave her life, she gave her life and everything she had. Selling her property and everything. She was a nurse and she was a married woman living near the property. She read in the paper that this property near hers was going to have this nuclear power plant. And she said, "Whoa, whoa, who ordered this?" And she went to the local council meeting. They had given their approval, I guess, without even thinking through. They were asked by PSO and they did it.

So she immediately took a stand. Now there were two movements going there. She was going by, "Let's go to court and let's file a petition." So her big thing was to try to fight each step along the way, which meant she had to raise money. She had to raise money

for lawyers and everything. And, of course, there was a lot of pro bono work or she never could have done it. And she mortgaged her farm and everything.

During the course of this long thing she made quilts that were raffled off. We had benefit suppers for this Black Fox movement. And in the end, her husband had died and eventually, I guess, she sold the farm, because she was so deeply in debt with this. She went the court route.

But then there was another group called the Sunbelt Alliance, and they were more for demonstrations and for actions, you know, like marches and actions. So—

JE: So you were involved in that?

GD: I was involved in that too. We had meetings and planned what our next action would be and so forth; raising awareness. And really, we were sort of saved by Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania by their leakage and their breakdown that then put a stop all across the country. There was a brief moratorium that you couldn't build anymore, and that was the impetus, you know, that stalled it long enough. It wasn't in operation yet and we were able to get it knocked out.

JE: I interviewed Norma Eagleton, who was at the time a corporation lawyer.

GD: Sure.

JE: And she talks in her interview about Carrie Dickerson coming to her hearing.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: There weren't many people there but who was going to vote against this—

GD: Little told old lady.

JE: ...this little old lady.

GD: Yes, uh-huh (affirmative).

JE: Exactly. And so they voted against it in PSO. Also, they weren't trying to contest it anymore, they realized that's the end of it.

GD: Yeah, yeah.

JE: You have to give credit to Carrie Dickerson.

GD: Oh my goodness, yes.

JE: Right.

GD: This woman really single-handedly stopped this. Of course, we all tried to help her once we found out about it.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

GD: But if she hadn't seen this in the paper and done something about it ...The *National Press* interviewed her, and they said, "Well, what kind of a constituency do you have?"

And she just made it up. She had nobody, you know. She said, "Well, I have about a hundred people." She was just making it up. She was just a little old housewife and nurse, but, boy, she just gave the rest of her life to paying off these bills.

JE: I'm so glad you brought that up, but it was your life that brought us to that story.

GD: Yeah, yes.

JE: So thank you for bringing her up.

GD: Yes.

JE: We can highlight her great activity.

Chapter 13 - 2:33

Offering Advice

John Erling: Young people listen to Voices of Oklahoma. Advice to young women, what do you say to them?

Gloria Dialectic: Stop at nothing, is my advice. Do what you want to do and don't let these supposed limitations even enter the picture.

JE: How would you like to be remembered?

GD: I would like to be remembered as a teacher, as one who teaches, even though I did only limited amount in colleges and so forth. But as one who teaches, through her words and through her life. And a feminist.

JE: Counseling is teaching.

GD: Yes.

JE: You were teaching—

GD: Yes, that's what I say it encompasses a lot of things. I'm a teacher in a lot of ways here with my aging buddies here.

JE: You have *Glorious Tablet*—

GD: Yes.

JE: A work in progress. This is about forty pages that I downloaded.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You said you first thought of them as foundation stones and then realized the image was too unitary and static. Tell me what this is.

GD: Well, people have been telling me for many years, "Oh, you should write a book, you should write a book." And, of course, in a literally field and an academic field writing books is very much to be desired if you want to get anywhere. And frankly, I just haven't done it.

One way that I maybe can excuse myself in talking about my life, in writing about my life story, or my memoirs, I don't like to read memoirs. I'm not interested at all in reading memoirs and autobiographies. And my feeling is, I don't want to sacrifice time in the present to read about somebody else's life. You know, I'm living my own life, moment by

moment, and giving up that time to read about somebody else's life is not—I just don't think it's wor—

JE: It's just wasting time, isn't it?

GD: It's wasting time. What I want to read is literature, where somebody's life has been digested. As Emerson says, "Art is nature passed through the alembic of man." In other words, somebody's imagination, somebody's being has processed that raw experience and made it into something that's immortal, in great writing. So I want to read it in that form, not the undigested. Raw experience doesn't mean anything to me.

Chapter 14 - 2:36

William Blake

John Erling: William Blake was important.

Gloria Dialectic: Oh, William Blake, I call him my spirit guide because he was just this phenomenal imagination and pictorial artist who was all alone. I mean, he doesn't belong to any group or any school of thought or any university or whatever.

In 1790, he is writing things that just are bedazzling, just knock you over. His interpretation of this struggle within religion and so forth. The literary world didn't know what to do with him, you know. He was publishing a lot right at the end of the eighteenth century. Some of his things are in the late 1780s, and then the 1790s, and then into the 1800s. But he certainly doesn't fit in with the world of eighteenth century literature, which is like Alexander Pope and people like that that are writing in couplets, you know, six-foot couplets. Goodness gracious, he's nowhere near that. And he's an artist and an engraver. His art is singular, it just stands for himself.

But he created this world, it's really based on psychology because, as he pointed out in one of his later books called *Milton*, the grand epic and central truth of western civilization up until that time had been Christianity. And Milton had used that as his unifying thing, and it was used up. We couldn't use that anymore.

Okay, so now what are we going to do with our new awareness of the world? So he really created his epics based on psychology. There are differently elements like the emotion, the reason, or analytic ability. You know, they were actually characters in his grand epic poems.

Most of know him for *Songs of Innocence*, and *Songs of Experience*, which are just little quatrains or just written in the simplest of what you call common meter, you know,

da-dat-dat-dat-dat-dat-dat-dat-da-dat-da-dat. But they are anything but simple; they are loaded.

You take a poem like *London*, three-, four-line verses. It packs so much in about western civilization.

Chapter 15 - 4:32

Gloria's Tablet

Gloria Dialectic: Anyway, what I wanted to say is people were after me to write these books about my life, which I wouldn't do. And then about literature and my worldview and everything, which is more incumbent on me to share. But I obviously didn't do it.

So I said to myself about two years ago, "I'll start typing all of these great quotations from different poems and novels and nonfiction books that were so important for me to form my worldview. And I called it *Gloria's Tablet*, in the sense of the tablet that renaissance people carried with them to record new thoughts or new facts or whatever. Hamlet talks about his tablet. It was quite the thing to do if you were a polished person, to be able to record these highlights of your thought or your emotion or whatever.

So it's called *Gloria's Tablet*, and I put in these quotations, I've been very neglectful in the past few months because I haven't finished off one that is very important. And that I find myself referring to and using in conversation and in writing. I've also written a lot of stuff and a lot of presentations that I would do at an Unitarian church where I was freer to use my own ideas and less bound by creed and so on.

I have one about the gospel according to Gloria Dialectic that tells about my journey, my life, and my worldview.

John Erling: Well, you ought to publish *Gloria's Tablet*.

GD: Yeah.

JE: And I will say after paging through it, anybody listening to this, this is for deep thinkers.

This is for deep thinking.

GD: Ha-ha, yes.

JE: There's no question about these.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: These are not light quotations at all.

GD: No.

JE: They're very deep, meaningful.

GD: Some of them I know by heart, you know, and I—

JE: Can you remember one right now by heart?

GD: Well, I have one that is very recent. It's from a long poem by Adrienne Rich called "Transcendental Etude." This is one portion of it that strikes me as what happens to the thinker who really probes to the heart of things. "But there come times, perhaps this is one of them, when we have to take ourselves more seriously or die. When we have to pull back from the incantations, rhythms we've moved to thoughtlessly and disentrail ourselves. Devote ourselves to silence or a deeper listening, cleansed of oratory formulas, choruses, laments, static crowding the wires. We cut the wires and find ourselves in freefall, as if the undimensional solitudes were our true home. No one who survives to speak new language has avoided this, the cutting away of old roots, old thoughts that kept her rooted to an old ground. The pitch of utter loneliness where she herself and all creation feel equally weightless, dispersed, her being a cry to which no echo comes or can ever come. But, in fact, we were always like this, rootless, dismembered, knowing it makes the difference."

JE: Wow. There ought to be applause for that. And you're eighty-four years old. We tend to lose our memory—

GD: Yes.

JE: ...the older we get. But that has stayed with you. That was beautiful.

GD: Yes. Thank you so much.

JE: That was beautiful. Thank you for reciting that for us. And thank you for this time that you have given us. And I just know that your story will certainly help many young people that will listen to this and encourage them. Don't give up just because you have rheumatoid arthritis, don't give up.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: You're abused, seek help.

GD: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: In case of rape, reach out. All of this will come about because of what you told us today in your life. A very meaningful life. Thank you, Gloria.

GD: Thank you, it's been a pleasure.

JE: For giving us this time. Thank you. It's nice to see you smiling.

GD: Okay.

Chapter 16 - 0:33**Conclusion**

Announcer: This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation-funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience. Thank you for your support as we preserve Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time, on VoicesofOklahoma.com.