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Interview with the Daughters of Marjorie Faucett Patterson

Marjorie Faucett Patterson
SC Mother of the Year 1995

Lynn Trobridge
Daughter of SC Mother of the Year

Laura Timmons
Daughter of SC Mother of the Year

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South Carolina Mother of the Year Award Oral History Archives
Interview Transcript

Lynn Trobridge and Laura Timmons
Daughters of Mrs. Marjorie Faucatt Patterson
Winner of the 1995 South Carolina Mother of the Year Award
June 24, 2015

Dr. Disney: Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Jennifer Leigh Disney and I am honored to be today with two daughters of a South Carolina Mother of the Year. Marjorie Faucatt Patterson was a South Carolina Mother of the Year in 1995 and we are honored to be here twenty years later with two of her daughters, Lynn Trobridge and Laura Timmons. Thank you both for being here today and kind of speaking on behalf of your mother today. We really appreciate it.

Mrs. Trobridge: Thanks for asking us.

Dr. Disney: We'll start with when and where your mother was born and raised. Tell us a little bit about her family, her education, and her early childhood experience.

Mrs. Timmons: She was born in Union, South Carolina. She had two brothers and two sisters. She lived her whole life in Union and then she went to Columbia College here in Columbia and worked for Columbia College for several years, three years maybe, before she married Daddy. Then after she married, she stayed at home and raised her family.

Dr. Disney: How many children are in your family total? How many children did your mom and dad have together?

Mrs. Trobridge: Six. Two boys and four girls.

Dr. Disney: Six? Wow. That's amazing. What would you say were your mother's goals, dreams, and aspirations when she was a young woman attending Columbia College before she met and married your dad?

Mrs. Trobridge: Well, I would say she probably just wanted to be the best at whatever she decided to be. She started off working, like Laura said, for the college. Probably would have done that if she hadn't have met Daddy and married and then had children. She always just wanted to give of herself totally, to the most, and that's one thing she taught us, you know. You're to be committed and give it all you got. So, I feel like with six children, there's a chance that maybe one or two might not do exactly what you want them to do, but all six really are, you know, good citizens in this state and they all live in the state of South Carolina, all educators, doctors, and attorneys, so all civil servant people working for the state.

Dr. Disney: Do you know how your mom and dad met?

Mrs. Trobridge: Yes, we do know that.

Dr. Disney: Would you like to tell that story?

Mrs. Timmons: Funny story, they were on dates, but they were not dating each other. They were dating different people and they met through these dates and after that, they started dating. And the rest is history.

Dr. Disney: Do you want to talk us through the six children? Just tell us a little bit about the two of you, what you do and if you have any children, and the same way with your siblings so we learn about Marjorie through these six children.

Mrs. Trobridge: Well, I'll do it in chronological order because that's the way my brain does it. Well, **Lec** is the oldest and he is married and he has three children and he has a grandbaby on the way, due in November so that will be Momma's first great-great-grandchild so we're excited about that. He's an attorney here in South Carolina, in Columbia. He's married to Sallie Jordan Patterson. The next is Steve. Steve is a radiologist in Orangeburg, South Carolina. He's married to Katherine Calloway and they have two girls. I come next. I'm here in Columbia, married to Tommy Trobridge and I'm a curriculum resource teacher here at Satchel Ford Elementary School here in Columbia and I have two girls, two daughters. Then, Laura.

Mrs. Timmons: I'm next, I'm married to Johnny Timmons, right here from Columbia and we have three girls. I'm also an educator, I teach at Satchel Ford Elementary, Lynn and I work together and I've been in the classroom for thirty-one years. Then, Amy's next. Amy married Jerry Sheppard and they have two boys and she is an attorney in Aiken. Beth is the youngest and she married Will Dryden and she also is an educator here in Columbia. She works in Special Education.

Dr. Disney: Wow, that's great. Very successful family. Could you talk a little bit about what kind of activities your mom was involved in, as far as in the family, in the community, education, employment, before and after she was married, and after she was raising her family. Any and all of her activities that you're aware of that she was involved in.

Mrs. Trobridge: She was probably involved in a lot of things but the two that always stick out are Columbia College, that is dear to her heart. She was just involved in the alumni association and the, I can't even think of all the things she did out there, and then the church, Shannon Presbyterian is very special to her also. So if she wasn't at home or going somewhere with Daddy, she was at Columbia College for something or Shannon Presbyterian for something.

Dr. Disney: Did she work outside the home when she was raising her children or did she focus solely on raising her children?

Mrs. Trobridge: Raising children. Daddy was a politician, so she was very supportive of always being with him. They went more than we went as young people, they were always on the go.

Dr. Disney: Tell us about your dad. Was he State Treasurer? Grady Patterson, so what was that like, having a politician dad in the family? What was that like for you and how did your mom handle that?

Mrs. Trobridge: I sum it up by saying everytime we left the house, Momma would say, "Be sweet!" so I think that kind of tells you what was expected, we were always, you know. I was just out there talking with Mrs. Ann Edwards about what true statesmen Jim Edwards and Daddy were, they were really true South Carolinians, loved the state of South Carolina. They were both from different political parties and you would have never known it, they were the best of friends and they appreciated and supported each other in every way. Ann was saying that Grady was a great man, but he wouldn't have been where he was without Momma, she was really right there behind him, every step of the way, always.

Dr. Disney: That's so beautiful. I can't help but think about the events of the last two weeks in Charleston and what you just said about statesmanship and how the state and the city and the events of this week have shown that regardless of party, true statesmen can come together. I think we've seen Charleston, the same way that your dad and Jim Edwards did, just really kind

of model that kind of behavior so that must have been a great home to grow up in, with those wonderful role models.

Mrs. Timmons: Daddy was also in the military, so he was in the Air Guard here in Columbia, the McEntire Air Force Base so he was constantly busy, so Mom really was there for us all the time.

Mrs. Trobridge: And somehow, she did everything. I don't know how she did it, because I can't do just for me. My girls are grown and my husband doesn't need me right by his side for anything, and I can't get all done what I try to do. Yet, she could be at something for him, right beside him, and have a piano recital an hour later, and then be back home getting supper ready for whoever, and then go to the dance recital or the baseball game. I mean, I don't know how she juggled it all, but she did, and with ease and grace and calmness, I mean she just, I don't know how to describe her more than to say she just took everything in life with such ease and grace.

Dr. Disney: And you kind of just described your childhood experiences. In other words, I was going to ask you to talk a little bit about what it was like growing up with six siblings being led by the mom that you had. You all were very active, it sounds like you were doing all sorts of things and you had a mom that was there supporting you in all of those endeavors.

Mrs. Trobridge: Exactly. I still, like I say, as a mother myself and only raising two girls, there were times I just didn't know, if I didn't have my siblings here in Columbia, I might not could have done it. We would call and say, "Can you go get Marjorie?" and that's not even a large job, but we did it that way. But Momma did it on her own and I just, I don't, I can honestly say she never missed anything that we did, whether it be a school program, a dance recital, I just, you name whatever children do, she was always there.

Mrs. Timmons: And then continued that with our children, to be at every event that our children did, dance recital, then at school, she was always there.

Dr. Disney: What do you think motherhood means to your mom?

Mrs. Trobridge: I think that's probably one of the most important things to her. I was reading back over the article that was published when she was named Mother of the Year and she said the greatest honor that she could have was being a mother. She's very, very proud. The word, she just truly exemplifies what that word is.

Dr. Disney: And clearly raising six children. When you're doing it all, that alone is deserving of Mother of the Year. I mean, hearing you two talk about her, it just supports why she was chosen to be Mother of the Year in 1995.

Mrs. Timmons: She cooked a meal every night, all of us around the round table in the kitchen. I can't sometimes even get, I mean, we go out to eat a lot because I can't get a meal cooked in today's world. Every Sunday, she had a meal after church. There are four of us here in Columbia and we all go to the same church, Shannon Presbyterian, and Momma would always have Sunday lunch and we were continuing that tradition now. Lynn cooks dinner for us every Sunday and we always have Sunday lunch together. My husband always calls it the Margie Meal, the best meal of the week, because many days I do not have time to get supper done so we go out to eat a good bit.

Dr. Disney: Let me say this, I have one son. I work, I have one son, and I can't manage, so I'm so impressed with learning about your mom and the other Mothers of the Year.

Mrs. Timmons: And the time together at dinner was a time that we talked, we didn't have phones that we were looking at constantly or whatever, and it was just a genuine time for us to reflect on the day and just talk.

Dr. Disney: That's a good segue to maybe to comparing, what do you think your mother would say were some of the issues she faced raising children, being a good mother, being a good wife, being active in the community the way she was. How does that compare to your generation and some of the issues you're facing in terms of balancing work and family and do we have it harder than they had it, are there certain things that we could learn from them, like things that they did well that we don't do well? Talk a little bit about intergeneration experience.

Mrs. Timmons: They're just different issues. You know, she didn't work, but she was so active, she was either at church or at Columbia College, so it's like she had a full time job because she was at either place every day.

Mrs. Trobridge: And although she, being involved in church, she was chair of committees, it wasn't just like she went to meetings, she was in charge. My brother and I were talking the other day about how'd she did it, you know? We remember she would stay up late at night if that's what it took to get it done and get up the next morning, fix some breakfast for all six of us, and getting us out the door and doing all that. She just, when I think about it now, and thinking about what I do, it makes me really marvel at what a great person she is.

Dr. Disney: And you try to continue those traditions of family meals and Sunday lunches, but you feel how hard it is to get it all done. What do you think it meant to your mother to be named the South Carolina Mother of the Year in 1995? What was that like for her?

Mrs. Trobridge: Well, I think she was truly honored. She's very humble, so she didn't walk around shouting out to the mountain tops and all. But to be, she and Daddy both loved the state of South Carolina and to be named the South Carolina Mother of the Year just meant the world to her. She was truly, truly honored and just felt very blessed that this happened to her.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. Do you remember anything about that year? Any activities she was a part of or going to the Governor's Mansion for tea, tell us anything about that.

Mrs. Trobridge: Well I do remember going to the tea and it was very nice and we talked to a lot of people, but it was really fun to go to the Governor's Mansion and to be up there, doing something like that. There were a lot of people, I do remember that, a lot of not just women, but men also, came to the tea, so it was nice to see them too.

Mrs. Timmons: And then she did go to the National, I guess the current South Carolina Mother went to the National meeting and I remember Daddy going with her and it was always Mom going with Dad so this was the time for him to be with her, which was kind of a different role for both of them.

Dr. Disney: That's true. So he went with, or he accompanied her to her accomplishment this time, when before she was accompanying him.

Mrs. Trobridge: And I know also, a couple years ago when she was more active, there was a Mother of the Year Luncheon here and it was very important. She always went to them anyways, but this was at a time when she wasn't driving, so she wanted me to take her. She wanted one of us to take her and it just happened to be me that could go. But that was still so important for her, to her, for her to be there with the other South Carolina Mothers of the Year.

Dr. Disney: Yeah, this network of women, the South Carolina Mothers Association. We're interviewing the committee members who've selected the Mothers, as well as the Mothers, because there seems to be such a strong network of women, even when they're not being interviewed today, they're hanging out in the back for an excuse to be together and hang out. There's something special about this group of women.

Mrs. Trobridge: It is. And like, when I walked up, they all jumped up and hugged me, it's like family, exactly.

Dr. Disney: What do you think your mother would say are the most important issues facing women today? Or what would you say, you can also speak for yourselves as South Carolina Women.

Mrs. Trobridge: I think she would probably say just trying to juggle it all, like we've said several times today. I think she was very supportive with us working and having children, she did whatever she could to support that and I think she saw just how hard it is for women to do what they want to do and still be a good mother. I think a lot of women today struggle with that. You know, you feel like you're leaving something out. You've got to take care of your family, you've got to do your job, you've got to take care of yourself, and sometimes you feel like I've got to be slighting one of them, which one am I slighting?

Dr. Disney: I think that balance, I think it's one of the most important things, I guess issues, that women really face, is how to balance being working mothers who, well all women are working mothers, whether they work outside of the home or inside of the home, they do it all. Do you think our society adequately recognizes women's roles as mothers and women's work as mothers and women's work inside the home as much as we should? Do you think motherhood kind of gets the recognition it deserves, or could we do more as a society?

Mrs. Trobridge: I think there are fewer mothers that stay home, as teachers, we're seeing that yearly, as more of our children, both parents work now, we have less and less homeroom mothers, that used to be there every day helping out. We still have some, but we have less, so I think in general there are less, but I do think that they are such an important role, I'm not sure that society does recognize that as much as we should though.

Dr. Disney: I think the Mother of the Year is one good way that we have tried to do that. What does the word "feminism" mean to you, and also to your mom? You may not be able to answer that for your mom, maybe you can answer it more for you. But when you hear that word "feminism," I'm curious to hear what each of you think. What comes to mind when you hear that, what does that mean to you?

Mrs. Trobridge: First thing that jumps to my mind is women standing up for themselves and their rights and all. There is one feminist that stood out, she wrote books and I read one of them and thought, "I don't know if I believe all this." You know, I believe in females having the equal rights and all, I don't call myself a feminist though, its kind of a word that has kind of a connotation to it, I can't put words on what I'm trying to say.

Dr. Disney: Well I was going to ask you the same thing, do you consider yourself a feminist?

Mrs. Trobridge: I don't really consider myself a feminist, but I will stand for what I think is right for women and for myself as a woman, I will definitely stand up for it. I guess when I think of feminists, I think of going around rallying with signs and all, and I'm not, I don't do that. I certainly would speak out for what I think it right.

Mrs. Timmons: I just feel like women today have more opportunities, I felt like when I was in college, I had opportunity to nurse, be a teacher, that was really what I felt like the careers I could go into were. Women today have so many opportunities and are able to make different choices to have different careers and stand up and be able to manage home, a professional career of working, politicians and doctors and lawyers and are also able to be mothers at the same time. I guess we just have more support.

Dr. Disney: Maybe feminism has helped open up and create those additional opportunities for women. It's interesting, the older generation of women that we've interviewed, when you ask what does feminism mean to them, I've been impressed and amazed by how many will say, "Well to me, feminism is" and they give these beautiful definitions, all very different, but then they say, "Based on my definition, I am a feminist." So there's these interesting willingness to claim feminism, even though it may mean "me pursuing the path that God has designed for me as being a wife and mother" or just simply pursuing women's equal rights with men, "ensuring that my daughter has the same opportunities as my son," there are lots of different ways to define it and I hear you both saying it doesn't have to mean a protest politics, it can mean making sure our sons and our daughters, our women and our men, have equal opportunities in occupations and being who they want to be, and pursuing their dreams.

Mrs. Trobridge: I think the way you said it, "pursuing the path that God had for them," that really brought a new meaning for me to think of it like that.

Dr. Disney: I think it was the last Mother of the Year, right, that gave that definition – "God's Chosen" – Annette Sutcliffe. That definition for her was "finding and pursuing God's path to be the best wife and mother she can be." So based on that definition, she was a feminist. I just thought was beautiful.

Mrs. Timmons: That is beautiful.

Dr. Disney: So do you all have anything else you would like to share with us, or any questions you want to ask of us, or anything you want to share about your mom or your mom's experience being Mother of the Year, motherhood, womanhood, feminism, any of the things we touched on? Anything? Did we do a good job asking questions? I think y'all did a good job.

Mrs. Trobridge: I hope so, we want to represent her well.

Dr. Disney: I mean, you come from a prominent family, your dad was State Treasurer. Do you remember what years that was, or how long he held that position?

Mrs. Timmons: Thirty-six, thirty-four? Thirty-three years, it's something around there.

Dr. Disney: Wow, and your mom raised six children while supporting his career and all of your growth and development, that's amazing. Congratulations.

Mrs. Timmons: She was by his side. Whenever he needed, she was right there, but yet also taking care of the children and being there right when we needed her too. I don't know how she did it.

Dr. Disney: I wish she could have been here with us today, but I'm really glad that you guys could be here for her and speak for your family and just thank you so much for time.

Mrs. Trobridge: We appreciate you doing this and letting us have the opportunity to speak for her, I do wish she could have been here. She's a sweet, lovely person, but just physically she's not able to get out like she used to. When Daddy passed away, she really just, to tell you, I tell

people, this much of her brain was Grady Patterson and all this was just the other stuff and when that left, she didn't know how to, she just lost a lot of her energy and drive.

Dr. Disney: Especially a partnership that is that connected, it sounds like they were really true partners in every sense of the word. So that makes total sense.