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Interview with Anne Porcher Perrin and Daughter, Anne Perrin Flynn

Anne Porcher Perrin
SC Mother of the Year Committee

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

Anne Porcher Perrin with her daughter Anne Flynn
2010 South Carolina Mother of the Year
July 13, 2015

Dr. Disney: Good morning, this is Jennifer Disney and I am happy to be here interviewing Anne Porcher Perrin. She is sitting with her daughter, Anne Flynn, who we just had the wonderful opportunity to interview as well. It's beautiful to have a mother-daughter team, since we're here to talk about women and motherhood and those kinds of topics. So thank you very much for being here with us today.

Mrs. Perrin: Well thank you for asking me.

Dr. Disney: Would you start by telling us when and where you were born and raised?

Mrs. Perrin: Well I was born on farm in Orangeburg, South Carolina, eight miles out from Orangeburg, in the country, which was a very happy life for me as a child because Daddy had a dairy and he was a master farmer and I was brought up with a lot of help around and I just had a real easy childhood. There were lots of animals, I knew all the animals, you know, my friends and I had the opportunity to have. They'd come out, horses and cows and you know, just have a wonderful time growing up. All I can remember is just being a very happy child.

Dr. Disney: That's wonderful. Tell us a little bit more, anything else you want to share about your family and your early childhood experiences.

Mrs. Perrin: Well I had one brother and just the two of us, he was ten months older than I am. I don't know what else you wanted me to say, what do you mean?

Dr. Disney: Anything about growing up, your education, schools you went to.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, I went to Cordova School that my father was a trustee of the school, and so Jack and I went to grammar school there. Then I, when it came to junior high school, I went to Cope, South Carolina, which had a junior high school. My brother went to Orangeburg for high school and when I went to high school, I went to Orangeburg for high school. I had a real active life growing up with taking dancing lessons and doing all that and being in the band at the school. Jack played football, we went to every football game, and Daddy wasn't too hot about me being head majorette because of that little short skirt I had to wear. But anyway, we got him over that and he thought it was alright.

Mrs. Flynn: She's always had great legs. Great legs.

Mrs. Perrin: I guess I was pretty much a ham, I loved being head majorette.

Dr. Disney: That's wonderful. You're telling us wonderful stories about your education, your young adult life and continuing to do that. If you could also share with us what you remember, what were your dreams, your goals, and your aspirations at that time in your life.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, I finished Orangeburg High School and then I went to Limestone College for two years because my father wouldn't allow me to go to, I wanted to go to Carolina, wouldn't allow me to go to a co-ed school at first. If Clemson had been co-ed then, he would have let me go, but anyway. His sister was a trustee at Limestone so I went to Limestone for two years and after two years, I transferred to Carolina, I was allowed to go after two years, after I took a business course at Oglethorpe maybe, I had to learn to support myself in case of an emergency, which I would have been very lousy at.

Mrs. Flynn: Don't believe that. Don't believe that.

Mrs. Perrin: But anyway, I went to Carolina and that's when I met my wonderful husband. He was in law school and I was finishing up college and then after college, I got a job at the South Carolina Retirement System as an assistant to the head of the retirement systems, I helped her. I was not too fast at shorthand and typing, but I could do it, they had bored me. She was always there, thank God, because I couldn't have sat there and taken all those notes. But anyway, I had a wonderful time while I worked and I lived in a boardinghouse at first, at Ms. Mimi Melton's, who was across from the university, and after that, I moved in with my aunt and uncle, Thomas Howell. He was ill and I moved in to try to help her with Uncle Tommy, they were just like second parents to me. They lived on the corner of Senate and Grace Street in Columbia and then I worked there for a while and then unfortunately, Pat's, we got engaged while I was there, and then unfortunately Pat's father died and I knew Mama Perrin would not come to any parties because she was going to mourn a year, you know, it was back in those days.

Mrs. Flynn: And did she really wear black, Momma? All year?

Mrs. Perrin: I don't know whether she did or not, I can't remember that, but I bet she did, knowing Momma Perry.

Mrs. Flynn: I just remember you telling me that she wore black and that she didn't go anywhere.

Mrs. Perrin: And she would not go to any social things, so that's the hardest year I ever spent in my life, I don't believe in long engagements because I think it's wear and tear on your relationship, but anyways, I lasted out, it lasted. We finally got married and had a wonderful wedding at the farm, which poured rain, Lord, Daddy and Mother had the whole yard wired with electric lights and we had a downpour, my God.

Mrs. Flynn: Well you did say they had to pull tractors—

Mrs. Perrin: Wait a minute, they were paving the road from Orangeburg to my house and it was a living mess. Daddy had to have the tractors out to pull people out that came to the wedding. It was just awful.

Mrs. Flynn: But you said you hardly knew it was raining, you had such a great time, and the house was beautiful.

Mrs. Perrin: Mother lost so much weight, you could put two hands down her dress because she was so upset about it. But anyways, it didn't matter to me, I was just happy as a bug in a rug. I guess I got all the tears out of my life at that wedding. You're lucky if it rains at your wedding, it rained at Anne's wedding.

Mrs. Flynn: Poured down rain, our auxiliary came on at the church.

Mrs. Perrin: I kept thinking people would leave—

Mrs. Flynn: We sat a long time at the reception.

Mrs. Perrin: Well anyway, that's the kind of thing we remember, the fun things. But we lived through them and we had a good time. We bounced back.

Mrs. Flynn: They lived on a beautiful piece of property outside of Orangeburg and my grandmother's home was just lovely, unfortunately, you couldn't handle everybody in the house, but the yard was pretty spectacular too.

Mrs. Perrin: Oh she was quite a gardener, Mother would love to garden and she had a beautiful garden. We had a picket fence around the yard and she had beautiful borders around the picket fence. I could remember when I got married, we had this huge gardenia bush and I got up on a ladder and picked all the dead ones off so it would be pretty for the reception, then the rain came. I don't think anybody saw the gardenia bushes, but anyway. Had the reception on the front porch, it was a porch that went all the way around the house and it took care of everybody that came.

Dr. Disney: Tell us about the early years of your marriage and the birth of your children.

Mrs. Perrin: The early years of my marriage. Well Pat and I were married and we built a little duplex, I didn't have any money, but as a teenager, I won the jackpot at the theater, I had \$350. I said, "Pat, I'll give you my endowment." So my \$350, we went to try to build us a duplex and build a duplex before we were married and it was finished and we moved after we were married, for our honeymoon, we moved into that duplex. It was on Palmetto Street here. In fact, it's still there. And we lived there until, I had Anne there, and I had Sally there, but when I was pregnant

with Ed, there was no room in there anymore, so we bought another house, on the corner of Fairview and Boyd, right there in front of Pine Street School, which was a wonderful location because all my friends bringing their children to school would stop by to have a cup of coffee. It was just grand, they could walk to school from the house. It was a very wonderful neighbor with children all around, they grew up with fun. Pat's sister lived up the block from us and her children were always there and across the street was the, we just had a neighborhood full of children and Christie Smith would always give plays, she would teach at Pine Street. Even as a child growing up, we would have plays in the playhouse in the backyard. Pat and I turned one part of the garage into a playhouse for the girls to have. They did plays.

Mrs. Flynn: It was a show place. It was a show place. Curtains, tablecloth, napkins, oh you name it, Mother had it.

Mrs. Perrin: Well Pat and I both loved to work in the yard, he liked to work in the yard and I liked to work in the yard and I can remember, we were both pretty good disciplinarians and Pat always backed me with anything I wanted to do. And I can remember one day, Pat was working in the yard and Dr. Smith across the street, my daughter Sally was standing in the yard, and he said, "Say hello to Dr. Smith." And Sally whispered, "Hello." And he said, "Sally, say hello to Dr. Smith." Sally didn't say it. He said, "Well you can just stand there until you can speak to Dr. Smith." Well, it was getting a little chilly and Sally wasn't gonna say it, so finally I went in the house and got a little sweater and put it on Sally and finally she said, "Hello Dr. Smith" and Pat said, "What did you say?" She said, "Hello Dr. Smith." He said, "Say it again." She said, "Hello Dr. Smith!" By this time, Dr. Smith had gone, but anyway, he stood there til she said. You know, its just, isn't it funny how it's little things like that that you remember?

Dr. Disney: Yes, it's an important part of parenting.

Mrs. Flynn: If Sally was here, I'd say something but I'm not. I'd rub it in a little bit, but I'm not gonna do that.

Dr. Disney: Well you're already talking about plenty of the activities that your mom did. So if there's anything you wanted to share, activities you were involved in, both before and after you were married, in terms of family, community, education, employment.

Mrs. Perrin: Well I was always a class mother, you know, and I did my voluntary work with the Junior League. In the church, I taught Sunday School all five years while my children were in Sunday School and I was head of the Elementary Department growing up. Pat was the youngest Deacon in the Presbyterian Church and we have always been very involved with church activities and the community because Pat thought he ought to give back to the community and hopefully, we've brought up our children to do the same thing. I think they have and continue to be. We had a wonderful life with our children. We'd go to the beach and the lake in the summer and we taught them to waterski at Lake Bowen where Anne now has a home. We didn't have a boat, but Pat's brother, Buck, was a fisher and he had a boat and he gave us a key to the boat and

we would ski. We'd take them on the weekend and teach them how to water ski. We just had a grand time with that and did that a lot.

Mrs. Flynn: Well one thing you skipped over, and I really want you to talk about this a little bit. Mother is very involved with the arts in Spartanburg. She thought arts were really important to education, she was, like she said, she was involved in everything. She was a Girl Scout Leader, she was involved in my Girl Scouts group for as long as I can remember and you were in Girl Scouts til you were in high school. She took us to all our activities and every swim meet I was in all over a four-state region.

Mrs. Perrin: Oh gosh, the swim meets. Anne was quite a swimmer and we went swim meets, have you ever sat in a swim meet? I mean, she was quite—

Mrs. Flynn: But the other...in her forties, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and she became a strong advocate for the breast cancer association in Spartanburg and went to call on people in the hospital and you have done that now for forty years. So I mean, she's been very active in that.

Mrs. Perrin: Well I was blessed, I caught it in the very beginning and just got along fine. I've been blessed in that case.

Dr. Disney: Congratulations on being a survivor and going on to help other women. Congratulations.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, I was a survivor because I had a good doctor and he got it all and you know, it was...I can't remember being so uncomfortable with it, but I had known several ladies who had breast cancer and went places without a prosthesis and I thought, "God, that is just awful." I guess I'm just vain. So on the way back from the hospital, I said, "Pat, stop along with Dr. Smith. I'm going to get a prosthesis." And the lady there was fitting me, she said, "Mrs. Perrin, this is awful early." I said, "I don't care how early it is, I want a prosthesis or a bra that I can wear." So I, from the very beginning, started with that. And I would call on people because I think it's really important to maintain your life and your ability to do things as quickly as possible and Pat was such a supporter, he would have thought I was still the most wonderful person in the world. I never felt that I was cheated of anything because of him

Dr. Disney: I love that. Thank you for sharing that. It's really important.

Mrs. Flynn: Chemo therapy did not exist when she had this and they did radiation and the radiation was very extensive and it's almost like being burned, so she started the radiation very early and one of my earliest memories was my dad taking her to the basketball game to see my brother play. People were coming up to hug her, but she was so raw from the radiation.

Mrs. Perrin: In fact, I had a spot that would not heal for a long time and I went back to the doctor and I told him and he said, “Well, we’ll do a skin graft” and I said, “No, give God a little more time. He’s working on it. He’s working on me and he’s working on it.” And it did, it finally healed and it just got great, but people don’t realize, you know, when you have radiation, it saps your energy and you get so exhausted, but that’s the only thing that I can remember that was so terrible about it. I was so blessed because our minister at the time had cancer, and I’d go for radiation and he was ahead of me, that’s Dr. Poe, and just before we’d go in for our radiation, we’d both have a little prayer, so he got me through all of that. The Lord was sitting on my shoulder the whole way through. I have been blessed.

Dr. Disney: What a story. Thank you for sharing that.

Mrs. Flynn: There’s one other huge thing that Mother did and she did this much later in her life. She chaired a committee that brought a full Carolina Bell to First Presbyterian Church Bell Tower and we and our family finally called this the Five Years of the Bells. And so if you see my mother coming to ask you for a donation, you just better pull out your checkbook and write because she’d get you to write a check quicker than anybody I know. But that is another story that has led to many things, not only with my children, but with our family. My parents went to the Bacard foundry in France and met the family, the Van Bergens, and they came here.

Mrs. Perrin: As a committee, we drove all over everywhere that has bells. What’s the hotel that had the duck that Hope Anders...

Mrs. Flynn: In Michigan?

Mrs. Perrin: No, there’s the ducks that always come out. I forgot, but anyways, they had the complete bells and so we went to hear those and then that’s when Pat said, “Let’s go to France and see Notre Dame.” And so we did. And the guy from Charleston who owned the company, yeah Mr. Bamberg, he took us through the factory and we saw the stuff. It was just really interesting and the bells were so exciting. They came in the huge bells and weighed tons. It was just quite a thing for the church.

Mrs. Flynn: And on the little E bell were my mother’s initials that the church did. But it’s just how your family becomes really involved in what you’re doing, it becomes important to you. And through the years, so many things have happened because of those bells and when my daughter got married, my husband and I are Episcopalian and our churches are right next to each other. And when my daughter, after they were exiting the church, the Carolina at First Pres and the Carolina at the Advent did an antiphonal response to the reception when everybody left, in honor of my parents. All of these things that you do as a family and you commit to as a family come back to you in so many ways. Not only through your church, but through your community and through other people.

Dr. Disney: That's a beautiful segue to my next question, which is to ask you what does motherhood mean to you?

Mrs. Perrin: Being a mother was God's greatest gift to me. I get real emotional. Your family and your children are your greatest blessings and I have wonderful children. I never had any problems with them in high school, but my friends did. My friends had lots of problems, but Pat and I did not have any problems. If we had them, we handled them at home. We did not have drug problems, we did not have drinking problems, we did not have so many that our friends had.

Mrs. Flynn: Boy, you didn't disobey Mama or Daddy! It wasn't worth the consequence if you did. And they had eyes in the back of their head; they knew what you were doing when you thought they didn't.

Mrs. Perrin: We didn't have eyes in the back of our head, but we had friends that knew that if you were doing something, then they could tell me. I'll never forget when Louise Hodge told me she saw you at the Toddle House at something like three o'clock in the morning and I thought—

Mrs. Flynn: I spent the night out with—

Mrs. Perrin: She spent the night out with a little gal who I did not know, which I usually did not let Anne do. I didn't let Anne spend the night with anybody that I did not know, but Anne was so crazy about this little girl, so I called the mother and she said yes, it'd be alright. And so I said yes, she could come that night and that was the night that she was at the Toddle house or whatever it was. You can remember better than I can, but she didn't go back to that house again. I said, "She can come to your house, but you aren't going to her's again." Because her mother wasn't there and they were out at some ridiculous hour.

Mrs. Flynn: It was past my bed time.

Mrs. Perrin: Oh my God, it was terrible. It was just like...oh gosh, I don't want to get into that.

Dr. Disney: That's a beautiful parenting story. I love that you shared that. How did you become a member of the South Carolina Mother of the Year Association and the Selection Committee?

Mrs. Perrin: I do not know who nominated me, I really don't know how I got on it. I was blessed to be on it because I fairly enjoyed it. The thing about it is, you know, back then when you got it, people stayed on it too long. They really need young people and somehow when I got on the committee, half of the committee had been on it for years and years and years. It got so that younger ones were doing all the work, not that we minded, but the others didn't have time or they weren't...I don't know what it was. So I made up my mind that after I had done what I could do for the committee, that I would get off and give a younger mother a chance. I can remember Anne asking me to be chairman, I said—

Mrs. Flynn: Not my Anne, Anne Edwards.

Mrs. Perrin: Anne Edwards wanted me to be chair of the Mother's committee, I said, "Anne, I am not a leader. I'm a good follower, but I am not a leader." And we had problems with the national organization. And I said, "I'll tell you what, I'll be secretary." And I'll do the minutes of everything and I'll do that. Well that was a chore too, cause these women can get awful tense. I would play the tape recorder and take the minutes and do that. I was blessed to get Gwen Howell on the committee, I got her on that. She's good, I knew she'd be good. And they were blessed to have my daughter cause she was really good. She was a lot better than her mother was. A good mother can improve on herself. And I did that with all my children.

Dr. Disney: Beautiful. It's beautiful. Tell us about your service on that committee. I hear great stories about the teas at the Governor's Mansion. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Mrs. Perrin: Well, I did whatever they told me to do. I did the flowers one year, I did the catering one year, but Callie Wienges I think just ended up doing it every year cause that was her little niche that she liked to do. Callie was a good friend of mine and Liv Lafitte, she was a good friend of mine at Carolina. She was on the committee, I don't know, maybe they recommended me, I don't know who recommended me. But I was, anyway, we had a great time.

Mrs. Flynn: Well we had a—

Mrs. Perrin: We had a big problem, we needed somebody from the Upcountry, and I was from the Upcountry, to be on the committee.

Mrs. Flynn: Fannie Louise Halcolm was Mother of the Year from Spartanburg when Mother was on the Committee and they did a lovely reception here in Spartanburg for her too. So Mother was really involved with Mrs. Halcolm. It really helps to have women from different regions of the state because there are so many capable women, if you only have them concentrated in one area, we miss out on a lot of options, but she modestly says, "Does flowers." She did have her own floral business.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, I didn't really have a floral business. I was kind of a, I got in kind of the backdoor, I have a next door neighbor who's like a surrogate daughter to me and we had, I was only doing flowers for my friend, they were having a party, I had roses. I said, "I'll be glad to do you a favor." And then all of the sudden, I realized I was spending money on doing everybody else's flowers and I was talking to Betty about that and she said, "Well let's start our own business." And so we did. We paid this designer from Birmingham to come give us classes in her garage and we pick all this stuff to teach us how to do. Well after we had done several things, she said, "I don't have to teach you. You know how to do that." Well my mother, growing up in the country, taught me how to arrange flowers. I could make big arrangements because we had twelve foot ceilings in our house. I couldn't make little designer arrangements, I wasn't good at

that. But anyways, we had a good time and we did weddings, we did the church, and the country club, we did the reception. We did BMW. I forgot about that, when BMW came here and were walking across those fields.

Mrs. Flynn: This was long after I left home and my mother, she was older than me when she started doing this. If she's giving a pint of blood, get in line, you want two.

Mrs. Perrin: And the thing about it is, Betty and June were so talented. Betty could do anything with color. June could do anything with ribbons, but you had to fight to get the prettiest flowers, because as we were doing arrangements, we always wanted the prettiest flowers, because the prettiest flowers make the prettiest arrangements. We had a grand time doing that. It was fun going to market. Then you appreciate people in business. You've got to create credit and we were trying to buy things to decorate for Converse College and the country club, but you have to buy so much of something before you can build up a credit and between Betty and June and I, and I had two daughters just getting married and started, I said, "Well I can buy some of that for their Christmas." They were doing half of that, we were just, to build up our credit. So finally we got some so we could build up our credit so we could buy what we wanted to buy.

Mrs. Flynn: She did give the best Christmas presents.

Mrs. Perrin: Anyway, we did, we had a lot of fun. We did that for about, I think nine years. It's a lot of work. You don't appreciate flowers until you do it, you have to go out and pick them. You have to treat them in water so they'll live and they have to sit there and just, until you do it. It's just like anything in life, until you do it, walk in someone else's shoes, you don't appreciate what they do. But anyway, flower arranging and florists, I give them a lot of credit.

Dr. Disney: And you served on the committee, I think, for fifteen years, the South Carolina Mothers' Association Committee, and brought in a lot of the committee members and Mothers of the Year and these amazing women. How did experience impact you, your family, your community? Your time serving on the Mother of the Year Association.

Mrs. Perrin: I don't remember how it affected me except that—

Mrs. Flynn: I remember her talking about the Mothers and what exceptional mothers and—

Mrs. Perrin: It was such a hard decision to, to when you get all these women who are so capable and have done so much and you want to pick the right one, it's quite a responsibility, I think, being on the committee. If you give it a lot of, if you really work at it.

Mrs. Flynn: The South Carolina society would allow an application to be viable for three years. So you didn't, if you submitted, if an application was submitted and someone was recommended, they could be chosen for up to three years. So sometimes you may have such a large number, you may be, you try to keep it from other areas. So if you had someone from lower state, you could

look at somebody from the upper, and you could always go back with someone else. But if you're trying to be equally distributed, it was a very hard decision.

Dr. Disney: I'm sure it was a very tough decision.

Mrs. Flynn: Very hard. Very hard.

Mrs. Perrin: But it was fun. And it was just, it was great to see the family, how much they celebrated, when they came to the governor's house and then the reception, it meant so much to them. It really did. And it was a lovely thought and thing, I think, for South Carolina to do.

Mrs. Flynn: Anne Edwards really put that into place. And if Anne Edwards picks up the phone and calls you, you might as well say, "Yes, what do you want me to do. And else do you have on your list?" But, I don't know a governor that turned her down and they were there, greeting the guests and so were their wives.

Dr. Disney: Great. Let me ask a few more questions, broader questions about women in society. What do you think are the most important issues facing women today?

Mrs. Perrin: I think the greatest issues facing women today is supporting family and job. I think it would be awfully hard, I didn't have that, but now it seems like that both have to work. I was blessed, I never worked, I was blessed to have good help all my life and my children were well taken care of, but I was always home. I think we didn't have the daycare facilities that they have now, they're so wonderful. Some of them. Of course there was a time they went through getting where they are today. I think it's really great that there's such restrictions that you have to have if you're taking care of children. It's so important that they have the right help and education growing up.

Dr. Disney: You talk so beautifully, you predicted my next question about that balance, how difficult it is for women to balance work inside the home, work outside the home, and you feel like you, when you were coming up, you were able to balance—

Mrs. Perrin: Oh yes, I was able to balance because I had help, I could work at the church and I knew that my children were safe and I could check on them every day, it wasn't like I was leaving them for days at a time. I mean, I was in and out all the time, but I had no problem with that. But I would think today's family, that it would be hard balance that. Unless you had — because babysitters are expensive. I can remember when my girls used to babysit, and they were good. And I would say, "Well when you babysit, make sure you clean up, you pick up, you don't just let everything happen." I can remember, we gave her a car because I didn't want the fathers driving my child home after they had been drinking, so when we gave her the car, I said, "Just go up on your babysitting" and they were afraid to go up on their babysitting because they were getting something like fifty cents an hour and I thought, "Go up and say don't come pick me up and you don't have to bring me home." I said, "That ought to be worth another fifty cent." And I

liked the idea because I didn't like the idea of somebody been drinking bringing my child and I knew my child wouldn't be drinking.

Dr. Disney: Do you think women's work and women's roles as mothers are adequately recognized by society today?

Mrs. Perrin: No, I really don't think it is actually, but it's getting better. I don't think women should be into everything, but I do think if you are a capable woman, that you shouldn't be overlooked in a job because you're a woman. If there is a man ahead of you and you can do as well as a man, I think you should be able to have that position.

Dr. Disney: That goes along well with my next question, which is what does feminism mean to you?

Mrs. Perrin: That word. I really don't know that I'm a feminist. I believe in equal rights and equal education and equal liberties for all, but I don't think I like the word "feminist."

Mrs. Flynn: "Southern Feminist," I use that term. "Gentle Feminist."

Dr. Disney: Now it's true, a lot of people say, "I believe in women's equal rights, but I'm not a feminist. I'm not a feminist, but..." I think that word has had a negative connotation for many generations and I think it's starting to change, I think it's changing, but you feel very strongly women should have equal rights and employment and you wanted the best for your daughters, as for your sons, and it sounds like you definitely, you're very sympathetic to working households where women and men both have to work and how women are able to balance work outside the home, and mothering, and work inside the home, and in the community. So, you seem to me that you hold a lot of the values that might be associated with feminism, even if that word is not the right word.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, maybe so.

Dr. Disney: Is there anything else you'd like to share with us or any questions you'd like to ask about motherhood, womanhood, southern feminism, and anything, anything you want share?

Mrs. Perrin: What are you going to do with these interviews, how are you – why are you doing this?

Dr. Disney: That is a great question. I am the director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Winthrop University and Martha Cranford and Shirley Fishburne first approached me, when they were going to do the seventy-year anniversary book in celebration of the Mother of the Year Award Committee. It started with the book, and then we said, "You know what? Let's do an oral history project. Let's create an oral history archives." And so we've established at the Louise Pettus Archives at Winthrop University, we have the South Carolina Mother of the

Year Award Archives. And so many women have given us written documents, photos, pictures, so we want to have a historical record of the women and mothers who have the great work that y'all have done around the state, selecting the mothers, being mothers yourselves. And we want to create a video archive of these conversations, these interviews, they'll be available on the internet. We have something called "Digital Commons" at Winthrop University. So people will be able to go to Winthrop University, click on Louise Pettus Archives, click on South Carolina Mother of the Year Oral History Project, and they can watch this video. And it's for future generations of women, we see it as both documenting the historical record and as research so younger generations of women can learn from your wisdom and your experience and how women through the generations have been able to care for their families, be leaders in their families, be leaders in their churches and their communities, and that kind of thing. So we hope it'll be an instructive research tool and just kind of knowledge, just to kind of gain that knowledge and wisdom, and have this kind of conversation across the generations.

Mrs. Flynn: There's one little thing, as you were talking, I was thinking about women and marriage and husbands. When my dad would come home every afternoon, shortly before my dad would come home, my mother would go back to her dressing room and do her hair and put on her lipstick and we always said, "Why are you doing this?" And she would say, "Your dad has had a long day and I need to look good when he comes home so he always wants to come home." And it's funny how the things your mother says...and she always looked good, she never goes to the grocery store if she's been working in the yard looking terrible, you never see her when she just doesn't look...you could be a movie star, Mother, because she's so well quaffed. As her daughter, that's one thing I aspire to cause I always go to the grocery store with my makeup and my hair all a mess.

Mrs. Perrin: At least I didn't go to the grocery store in my tennis clothes like our friends did, I thought that was terrible. And I'm not prudish, I don't think I'm a prude. I think as a certain age, you don't wear your tennis clothes to the grocery store.

Dr. Disney: You know, I'd like to say that you and your daughter spoke eloquently about the role model that you and your husband were as mothers and fathers, and as a partnership, as a true husband and wife partnership. And that's really important to the story, is women having supportive men in their lives. She's tried to emulate in her parenting and with her children what you and your husband kind of model for how to be great parents and a great family and a great husband and wife partnership so I wanted you to know that.

Mrs. Flynn: Well, when you have a mother like Anne Porcher Perrin, she's part of your soul, she's in you. And no matter where you go and what you do, she's there.

Dr. Disney: That's beautiful. How's that make you feel to hear that, to hear your daughter say that?

Mrs. Perrin: Well, she's always said wonderful things that I don't always deserve.

Dr. Disney: You seem very modest, Anne Porcher, too modest.

Mrs. Flynn: She is, she doesn't toot her own horn very well.

Mrs. Perrin: Well I didn't have much to toot over.

Mrs. Flynn: That's not true, that's not true. She'll say she didn't work, but she did work. And everything she did, she signed her signature with excellence.

Dr. Disney: That's an important point, what women do hasn't always been considered work, it if wasn't for a wage, if it wasn't outside the home for that more traditional sense.

Mrs. Perrin: Well, you know, it's just like, I didn't worry about who my girls were going to marry because I figured I had set standards for them that they would abide by. But I worried about Ed, I thought some little hussy is going to get him and ruin his life. So I was very particular about Ed and I will never forget the night that Ed wasn't home and I thought he should be home. And we had, when you walk down the hall, Ed's room was right next to ours. And we had, if you stepped on it, a part that squeaked. But now Pat would go to sleep and I never went to sleep until Ed got home and he was late getting home one night and I said, "Ed, where have you been? You don't stay out this late!" Ed was in college, now he was a grown man, and I said, "I don't give a." I was no fool, I knew what could go on and I didn't want him to be caught in something that he couldn't handle. I said, "Don't you ever get yourself in situation with something you can't handle."

Mrs. Flynn: But when he did make the selection, he did very well. We couldn't have done better if we had handpicked her ourselves. And sometimes my sister and I keep thinking, "Well, she loving on Linda a little more than she's loving on us." I say that in jest, but we have been fortunate that people our siblings have married have been special with not only our children and grandchildren, but with my siblings. Ed married a Texas girl and she took him to Texas and we never got him back, but he comes back to visit with his wife.

Dr. Disney: I think it goes back to the strong foundation that you've laid as family, as parents, the values, the discipline, it's all important for future generations to remember that, I think, when we're raising our children. So I cannot thank you enough for sharing your time with us today.

Mrs. Perrin: Well thank you, I hope I've been some help.

Dr. Disney: Absolutely. And again, is there anything else you'd like to share, any other questions or any comments you have for us?

Mrs. Flynn: I want to thank you for me having the opportunity to sit next to my mother in my own home and talk about her and her influence in my life and how she impacted me. As I said, I wanted to grow up to be Anne Porcher Perrin and I'm not quite there yet, but I'm working on it.

Dr. Disney: There's no better testament to motherhood than what you just said, and to have a mother daughter team interview like this, it just means the world to me. So thank you both so much for everything.

Mrs. Flynn: Thank you.

Mrs. Perrin: Thank you.

Dr. Disney: Thank you.