

**Smithsonian Institution
National Museum of American History**

**Philanthropy Initiative
Oral History Project**

**Interview with:
Helen LaKelly Hunt
Founder and President
The Sister Fund
New York, New York**

**Interview conducted by:
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AMANDA MONIZ: This is Amanda Moniz conducting an interview with Helen LaKelly Hunt for the Smithsonian's Philanthropy Initiative Oral History Project. It is May 10th, 2018, and we're in New York City. Could you please state your name and birthplace?

HELEN LAKELLY HUNT: Helen LaKelly Hunt. Born in Dallas, Texas.

MONIZ: Great. Thank you. I'd like to start by asking about your early years. Your family, your parents, your siblings. Can you tell me about your childhood home, please?

HUNT: Raised a daughter of H.L. Hunt who discovered the East Texas Oil Field, which he won in a poker game. He had a sixth grade education; a country guy with a great spirit. He was trying to figure out something exciting to do with his life and the East Texas Oil Field was, at that time, the largest oil field in the world. He started Hunt Oil Company. [He was a bigamist], and he had what is known as "the first family," his first wife [Lyda Bunker Hunt]. I am in "the second family." After the first wife died, he married my mother and legally adopted my three siblings and me. He was a typical founder of an oil company, sort of brought that kind of mindset and sort of excitement in whatever. And my mother [Ruth Ray Hunt] loved the Baptist church and raised us to be Southern Baptists.

MONIZ: Can you tell me, was philanthropy a part of your childhood? What did you learn from your family about philanthropy?

HUNT: The First Baptist Church taught us about that. That doctrine of the church is a doctrine that's important to me. What I love is the way they taught the scriptures to those of us who attended and there were certain things about that experience that absolutely impacted my brother [Ray Lee Hunt] and my two sisters [June Hunt and Swanee Hunt] and me about the beauty of giving. And for several of us, especially the marginalized. We noticed that when Jesus Christ was on Earth, he walked with the poorest of the poor.

MONIZ: Can you say a little bit more about how your church taught the scriptures? They seem to have made such an impact on you.

HUNT: Yeah, it did. I can't think exactly ... I think in the summer, it would be summer camps and we would actually go out and go into neighborhoods that were low-income neighborhoods and invite people to read the scriptures. But what I left with was... I had been raised in an elegant all-girls school in Dallas [The Hockaday School]. And I was raised in a mansion and my father had all of his kids go to Southern Methodist University in Dallas. And I wanted to be a high school teacher in the low-income part of town. I wanted to experience what it was like to live outside the bubble where I was raised. I was very frustrated knowing that I was cut off from my human family. And so that's what I did when I graduated. I had my student teaching in a more moneyed part of town; people weren't living on the streets in that part of town. It was a public school system, but every night the kids went home to a hot meal on the table and they didn't have bugs in their house and stuff like that.

Then, after my student teaching I was assigned to a high school in the low-income part of Dallas where I taught junior and senior English for two years and that really radicalized me. The same tax dollars in the same city distributed "equally" among the different schools? It wasn't equal at all. My school didn't have a complete set of anthologies. The streetlights were broken around the school so it wasn't safe to come to parent-teacher conferences. The garbage wasn't picked up. I began to see a whole way that low income families weren't helped to get out of poverty.

MONIZ: What led you to want to be a teacher initially?

HUNT: I just wanted to be with people that were different and at that time a woman went to college for her MRS degree and there were two fields open to a female in Dallas in the 1970s. And one was a teacher. Or, you could be a nurse (or a secretary).

MONIZ: You've described your experience teaching at an integrated camp as a formative experience. Could you tell me a little bit more about that? I'd be curious for as many details as possible, including the sights and sounds and feel of working at that integrated camp.

HUNT: Well, song was very central. We would sing a lot. As a high school student or in college, I was also a counselor each summer for young kids. And that's where I just loved listening to kids who were in families that weren't happy and knowing that it's not just family relationships that bring about joy and healing, but all of our relationships [can have deep meaning to us].

And the camp, we talked about giving your life to Christ, which meant becoming a servant. I think in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus suggested 'an upside down kingdom' where, instead of aspiring to be royalty and a king and at the top of the ladder, that a Christian life is one that is a servant life. I just think that is so beautiful.

MONIZ: So then I want to turn to your experience after you worked in the inner city school. You have written about how you had a financial awakening. You got divorced and then had a financial awakening, is that right? Could you talk a little bit more about that?

HUNT: It was an awakening that came about due to my sister, Swanee. We both had married and both had experienced a divorce. And in my case, I married a man [Randall (Randy) Kreiling] at SMU at the end of sophomore year and he was a law student and my father invited him to work at the company. And he got involved with some family members, actually not in my family but in my father's first family, who were trading the commodities market. My ex-husband actually taught my half-brothers [Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Herbert Hunt] to trade the commodities market and they started working and decided to corner the silver market. It became this big deal that didn't work. The silver market crashed and there were all these problems and all these people lost money and my ex-husband left the country.

So that was my experience of my relationship with the company. When I trusted this man to represent my voice, he did not do a good job of representing my values. And my sister, Swanee, and I were both just out of our depth. Money's very intoxicating for people. And women at that time were just at a distance from money. I didn't know anything about money and I was there as a single parent. My sister, also a single parent, called me and said, "Helen, have you read Forbes magazine this month?" I said, "No," and she said, "Well, someone told me about it. We're in it." I said, "You're kidding." And she said, "Well, go get it, if you have it at the house." I said, "Okay." "Open to page 35," and she said, "Look in the middle of the page." I said, "Oh, my goodness." And she said, "See, our names are there." And I looked and went "Wow." And she said, "Well, look how much we're worth." And I said, "Oh, my goodness. Swanee, where is this money?" She said, "I don't know. No one's ever talked to me about it."

So, she was the one that began to explore where this money was. It took some years to try to understand where the money was and at that time, in Dallas and in the South, women were not a part of the oil industry. There was a Petroleum Club in a beautiful building in Dallas where people who were in the petroleum industry would come for lunch. But women were not allowed to have lunch at the Petroleum Club. There was a ladies' lunchroom next to the Petroleum Club where women could have lunch while their husbands [were at the Petroleum Club]. So that [the gender issue] probably influenced the “powers that be” at the Company; that the Company stock was in a legal instrument where my sisters [June and Swanee] and I, as well as my brother [Ray], owned the Company, but no one told us [the sisters] about it.

And so we began to ask questions that resulted, over time, in the sisters receiving dividends. Suddenly, I had money for philanthropy.

MONIZ: I know you've written that in 1982 you decided to become more strategic about your philanthropy. Can you talk about what your philanthropy had been like up until that point?

HUNT: I really didn't do philanthropy because I didn't have money. My husband [Randall (Randy) Kreiling] worked, and I don't know what his salary was. And I don't know, I just wasn't ... I was always told "The lawyers at the Company will handle everything. You shouldn't have to worry your pretty little head about money." But suddenly ... I wasn't really interested in being a philanthropist, certainly. But if there's money in my name, "to whom much is given much is required" is a Scripture. So I wanted to do the best that I could with any money that was in my name.

So, would you like me to tell you a story?

MONIZ: Yes, I would love for you to.

HUNT: I thought, "Oh, my goodness. I've got to learn about philanthropy." And that's something you know really well. You have studied philanthropy. I knew nothing. Swanee and I decided to go to the Council on Foundations one year. It was Swanee's suggestion and she said, "Let's just go and meet people and find out what to do." So we went. I'm very shy. I'm an introvert. So Swanee goes out and starts meeting people and I go, "I don't want to meet these people 'cause I don't know what to say to them." But I went to what they had at the Council on Foundations' annual meetings. At that time they had a room for all the foundations to put their annual reports and you could learn about the different foundations by reading the annual reports. I brought bags down and I just took one annual report of each of the foundations and took them up to my room and I would order room service. And I just read these annual reports while Swanee was meeting people. And, at that time, in 1982/1983, the boards of the foundations were all white men. I wasn't surprised.

I probably read 50 annual reports and then near the end, there was one, and it was pink. It was like Pepto Bismol pink. It said the San Francisco Women's Foundation. And it was unlike any of the others. And I opened it and women were on the board. And not just women. Women of color were on the board. And I just went, "Oh, my goodness." Nothing else like it. And I started crying. I was so touched by the beauty of this idea that women, instead of blaming men for not giving to women, these women who aren't really taught very much about money, banded together. And they said, "Look, women shoulder the disproportionate amount of poverty in the country. Men aren't going to fund them. So why don't we come together and fund them ourselves?" And they just gave to the most marginalized. I was very moved with that model of giving.

MONIZ: So before we turn to talking more about your philanthropy in depth, a couple questions. Were you and Swanee close as children?

HUNT: Pretty close. Well, sort of. Yeah.

MONIZ: What's the age difference?

HUNT: About 15 months. I'm older. But she was the little spitfire baby of the family.

MONIZ: You just described yourself as an introvert but then you've also talked about these experiences of deciding to become a teacher and going and working in a school that was very different from your community that you grew up in. So, I'm hearing there's another side of you that's a risk taker. Am I hearing that right?

HUNT: No. For me, being in a school... Lots of introverts teach. I knew I was cut off from other people, so by teaching at a low-income school I was giving myself a gift. I didn't feel that I was a risk taker at all. But I was so thrilled for the honor of learning about another part of my city. And then, teaching is a very soulful experience. I didn't feel like I was taking a risk. I was just sharing a gift. I wanted to share and I felt like teaching isn't about teaching the material; it's about relating to students and having a chance to inspire someone to be their best just like a few people at my church had, I think, invested in me and inspired me to try to find my voice. It was not so much the content of English and history that I cared about, but working with students to help them find their voice.

MONIZ: Now let's talk about your philanthropic career. So it's 1982, '83. You're learning more about foundations and philanthropy. Can you give me an overview of what comes next and how you help create the women's funding movement?

HUNT: As a single parent, I brought my two kids [Kathryn and Kimberly], age four and six or something, to New York City. I didn't really know the east side from the west side but I just wanted to live here for a couple reasons. I met Jack Copeland (I'm fuzzy on how I first met him). He knew the family I was from and he invited me to work. He worked at Morgan Stanley. I wanted to learn about money. And he said, "Well, if you want to learn about money just sit beside me every day. I trade the markets and da da da." He taught me about money and I began to make investments with my money and I happened to start doing option trading and I made a lot of money. And for the first time I felt like I had money to give away because I made it. I took the money at the company, but then I began to make money on that money. So I thought, "Now it's mine to give away."

And I was interested in this annual report from the San Francisco Women's Foundation. And I thought, I don't know about other cities but apparently there was the Ms. Foundation and then there was Astraea Foundation and the San Francisco Women's Fund was maybe the fourth women's foundation. And I thought, "Well, I'm living in New York but I think Dallas has the money to start one in Dallas and that would be good for Dallas to start something like this." So I pulled people together of all racial backgrounds and asked one of the founders of San Francisco Women's Foundation to come and talk to them. And I gave my first talk standing up and introducing this woman to these 20 women to see if maybe they would like to start a Dallas Women's Foundation. 'Cause I knew the moneyed women in Dallas from my high school but I had worked in the lowincome areas of Dallas and I'd begun to meet a few activists. And another woman mentored me on how we pull them all together at her house.

So I was going, "Okay, this a configuration of a diverse group." And this woman by the name of Tracy Gary came. I introduced her and she talked about the

founding of the San Francisco Women's Fund. The Fund was, at that time, two years old. There was a new annual report. And so she left and the women decided to meet and I was living in New York but I would fly back and forth during the nine months that they were deciding whether or not to start a foundation. And they said, yes. But we were advised that San Francisco might say, "Women in power and money and da da da." And they said, "In Dallas—in Texas—you cannot use the words 'women' and 'money' in the same sentence. It's just way too radical. Also, what you definitely can't do is have the words 'women,' 'money,' and 'power,' in the same sentence. No woman's going to join. No man's going to ... Just forget it."

We had to phrase everything a little differently because at that time it was kind of scary to step into power ... I guess it was like a glass ceiling. And we had to break through that barrier in Texas.

MONIZ: So you got that established-

HUNT: I flew back and forth and eventually they said, "Yes, let's start it." And I helped pick the first leader and hire an executive director. So the Dallas Women's Foundation got started and then a woman in New York heard about the Dallas Women's Foundation and she asked me if I would like to start one in New York. I said to this lady in New York, Gloria Milliken, I said, "Gloria, I've heard of your work in housing in New York. It's such wonderful work. I admire it. And you've heard of the Dallas Women's Foundation. I'll tell you, I can't do a New York Women's Foundation. I don't know anybody." And she went, "I know everybody." And she did. So the two of us got together and eventually started the Women's Foundation and in 1988, we had a breakfast and we gave away \$50,000. And just this morning, there was a breakfast, and we gave away how much? 8 million. This morning.

MONIZ: 8 million? Wow!

HUNT: And every year the ballroom is packed. 22,000 people and, I don't know, I'm terrible with numbers in terms of how much they've given away over the years and how big their endowment is. But the Dallas Women's Foundation—do you know what the endowment is? Is it 60 million? And Roslyn Dawson Thompson is trying to get it up to 80 million. So, women are learning to wield financial clout, I guess is one way to say it.

MONIZ: So from there you then set up ... there's another step before you found Women Moving Millions. Is it the Women's Funding Network that comes next?

HUNT: After the Dallas Women's Foundation and the New York Women's Foundation. Right as the New York Women's Foundation was being formed there were about 14 women's funds. And they decided to meet in person. And that was the first meeting of what became the Women's Funding Network. At that time it was called the ... oh, goodness I forget the name. The National Network of Women's Funds. I was on the first board of that organization that was stewarding philanthropy—women's philanthropy—around the country. I helped start "The National Network of Women's Funds" which became the Women's Funding Network. And those three things were being built about the same time. And then as the funds began to proliferate, Swanee said, "Well, we should have one of these in Denver." She didn't know anything else about the past but I got on a plane with a couple people and went there and helped seed the Denver one. I seeded a whole one in Maine. My co-person here [Gloria W. Milliken], the woman who knows everything, she had a house in Maine and she wanted one in Maine. Then other people: Kansas, Florida, just all around they were wanting to start women's funds. I began to be asked to come and speak at a breakfast or something. And then the funds kept proliferating. The Sister Fund was really funding this National Network of Women's Fund and they had an executive director. And she was great at the beginning but she couldn't take it to the next stage. So my consultant at The Sister Fund got on the search committee. We phased that woman out. And brought on Chris Grumm. I was on the search committee and Chris was hired and Chris was ready to take it global and to raise millions and millions for the Women's Funding Network.

Then it was a lot later that Women Moving Millions came on the scene.

MONIZ: I know you got a PhD in Church History. When is that in this trajectory?

HUNT: That happened in 1997, 8, 9, 2000. I was exhausted. I'm an introvert. I didn't get to be an introvert. I had this calling to try to help women understand their financial situation and not just let men handle it all. I didn't know anything about feminism. I didn't feel like I was a feminist. I was really just trying to help women understand money. One day I looked back and I realized, I'm one of the few people not interested in women in trafficking; I'm not interested in women's political life; I'm not interested in economic justice for women or any of the issues. I'm just interested in women understanding about money. Plus, even though I believe all faiths are equally wonderful, I was worried that the feminist movement was secular and I wanted to study feminism, since I was part of the feminism movement but had never studied it, and I was also reading enough where I felt like faith was a part of the origin of American feminism but had been written out of history.

So I went to Union Theological Seminary and they stuck me in a department called Church History. But what I was really wanting to do was to discover the religious roots of American feminism. I was reading all about Seneca Falls and all of 19th century feminism and looking for the religious roots, when I accidentally discovered something that happened before Seneca Falls that was ripe with faith and feminism: the feminist abolitionists. So that's what I did my dissertation on. But I was also just wanting a break from all the activism.

MONIZ: So you took a break from the activism and then, can you tell me about how you got back into it? You've worked on founding these women's foundations and the Women's Funding Network. You get your PhD in History and then what's next?

HUNT: And the one thing missing is that once Chris Grumm came on board at the Women's Funding Network, she just immediately got 2 million from Kellogg and 5 million from Ford. It really became muscular philanthropy. She wanted me to come back on the board of the Women's Funding Network, so I'm the only woman who's been on the board twice. I was doing that [and] then I took my break. And then I'm excited about my dissertation and I want to publish it and that's when I get a call from Swanee.

MONIZ: Can you tell that story?

HUNT: So the phone call is... I'm minding my business and Swanee tells me on this phone call, "Helen! Are you sitting down? I have something to say to you. I've been doing my estate planning and I've decided, if it's okay with you, I want to leave you some money." And I said, "Really?" She said, "Yeah but I want you to do something with the money." And I said, "What's that?" And she said, "You're good at having women give money, big and bold, and I'm going to leave \$5 million to you to help women raise the bar of women's giving. Women are funding the symphony." I don't remember if she said this, but, "[They are giving] their husbands' alma maters millions. And their domestic violence shelter, \$20,000. Other people can fund the opera. We need women to give more boldly." And I said, "Oh, well, Swanee, thank you! Gosh, I hadn't thought about that." And she said, "Well, there's a problem." And I said, "What's that?" And she said, "I woke up recently and I thought you might die before me." And I said, "Oh, yeah?" And she said, "And you'll spoil everything." And she said, "Would you like the money now?"

MONIZ: Wow.

HUNT: And I went, "Wow. Oh my goodness." And I said, "Well, Swanee I'll tell you, I would only do this if I could put in something like that too." And I said, "Actually, how about ... I think I'd be happy to take this on. You only have a daughter and a son. And one stepson. I've got all these kids. I've got six. I have two of mine [Kathryn (Kreiling) Rombs and Kimberly (Kreiling) Miller], two of his [Josh Hendrix and Mara Hendrix], our two together [Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Hunter Hunt-Hendrix]. And they're wanting to start funding da da da." I said, "How about I do \$4 million, you do \$6 million. How about if I do 4 and instead of 5, you do 6 and with \$10 million I'd love to try." And she went, "See? You're already raising the bar of giving. You're already doing it." So she said, "Okay. And here are the conditions. Sarah Gauger heads up my foundation. I'd like her to be a part. I'm busy, busy, busy right now. I don't want to be a part of any minutiae or the daily whatever. You all decide."

I thought about it and decided I wanted a partner—and I did explore different options—but decided I wanted to partner with Chris Grumm at the Women's Funding Network because, what women's fund around the country didn't want to 'raise the bar' for giving? So, I thought, this is a development committee. They're all going to work ... I don't have to raise the bar. I can inspire them to raise the bar for giving.

So I invited Chris to become a co-chair and she was amazing. I learned so much from her. She was a great co-chair for Women Moving Millions.

MONIZ: Yeah.

HUNT: I don't remember how the word "millions" came about. Oh, I know how it came about! Okay. So, this is in the material. I was listening to a woman named Patty Chang who was with the San Francisco Women's Fund. She had been on the board of the Women's Funding Network and she was just in this group of activists; "donor activists," we called ourselves. And I heard her complaining one day. She said, "Oh, Helen I'm really, really upset. I'm just so frustrated." And I said, "What's wrong?" And she said, "All my million dollar donors for the San Francisco Women's Fund, I can count on one hand. Of all the people in California, only five are million dollar donors." And I was totally taken aback. I said, "You have a million dollar donor?" She said, "Yeah! But just a few." And I went, "You mean women have been giving at the million dollar level to a women's fund?" She said, "There aren't many but look at the wealth. Why aren't they giving more?" Well, that was the word that I went, "Oh, my goodness."

I then wrote an email to women, including, Marie Wilson, at the Ms. Foundation (she was the executive director), Gloria Steinem, Patty Chang. Maybe Tracy Gary. About 10 women. And I said, "Hi, everybody! I was talking to Patty Chang and she mentioned all of her million dollar donors to her foundation she can count on one hand. She was a staff person there." I said, "Do you know any other women that have given a million dollar gift to a women's fund?"

And they then began to go, "Well ..." Gloria had raised \$1 million from Alida Rockefeller Messinger, who lived (I think) in Minnesota. And she'd flown out there and gotten a million dollar gift from her in the 1980s. And then slowly, a woman named Barbara Dobkin, in New York (her husband was at Goldman Sachs and she was so cute. She was so hilarious). She would go, "Well, I got a million but I didn't tell my husband. I gave the New York Women's Foundation a million and didn't tell him." And so she had done one. Oh, and Sallie Bingham had destroyed her family business by a brother, this was the Bingham family in Kentucky. It's in the Trailblazer book . She disrupted her family business and ended up getting millions and then she put like, \$10 million in the Kentucky Women's Fund and started a Kentucky Women's Fund 'cause she didn't like the way she was treated in her family business, which was a newspaper out of Kentucky or something.

Anne Delaney spoke at the New York Women's Foundation this morning and she had given a million to the New York Women's Foundation, so I went over and said, "Why did you do this?" You know, this is what you would ask them. "Why now? Why women? Why big and bold? 'Cause no one else is funding at the million dollar level women's philanthropy." And they would begin to tell me their stories...

Oh, wait. I've gotten this wrong. I was doing that before Swanee's phone call. I got interested in women who were funding women at the million dollar plus level and I was writing a history book and I had no clue that I was ever going to raise any money with my history book. Because like you—you and I have a similar spirit—I just wanted to write the history of women who funded women at the million dollar level. I was creating a collection of stories of women. In my mind, I didn't say, "and this is to inspire other donors" or anything like that. I had written about 12 entries in my history book and that's when I got the call from Swanee. And that's why I so easily said, "Oh, yeah Swanee." And I said, "Guess what? I happen to be collecting stories." It took about a year or so before we came up with Women Moving Millions. Chris Grumm and I like the name Women Making History and you've read about why it was history making 'cause of Matilda Joselyn Gage.

MONIZ: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

HUNT: The women who couldn't raise money for suffrage. Then that's why I started crying again. The women didn't fund the suffrage movement, but now, first time in the history of the world, according to [historian of philanthropy] Kathleen McCarthy, I called to double check 'cause I was trying to find out could anyone research this.

MONIZ: So what had led you to write that book? To start writing the *Trailblazers* book initially?

HUNT: Patty Chang. Saying what she did and in my studies of 19th century feminism I started crying when I read the letter of Matilda Joslyn Gage writing Elizabeth Cady Stanton. And saying, "My dear Elizabeth, I've opened the paper another time and another time there's another woman in the paper and another time a woman gave money to the ballet. And they funded their husbands' alma maters, their church. They're giving big gifts. And no one is funding suffrage. And we are doing hunger strikes. And we're fighting for a vote in a democracy. And for 60 years we've been out petitioning ..." I don't think they were petitioning but we were having rallies and marches and asking for the vote." And we need money because our national organization is broke. No woman will fund us."

When I read that and I heard Patty Chang complaining that she only had five ... all of her million dollars on one hand, that's when I went, "Wow" and that's when someone said there was a woman named Kathleen McCarthy, who I could call and check if this was the first time women were funding women. And that's when I thought this would be an important history book.

MONIZ: So then did that project sort of morph as you ... Can you talk about how it changed?

HUNT: So I just put it aside and worked with ... let's see, Chris Grumm and I put together a steering committee, Barbara Dobkin and others, and basically since I'd started these things I then decided to ... like Alida Rockefeller Messinger is in here. These are women who've given permission for other people to see. A lot of these women were anonymous. Okay, this one isn't alphabetized but this became the *Trailblazer* book that instead of really doing histories of women, we asked anyone who would consider stepping into women's philanthropy and making a million dollar plus gift could become a part of the *Trailblazer* book. And they were asked three questions. "Why now? Why women? Why big and bold?"

Sally Lindsey is one of the women who wrote the *Trailblazer* book with me and Elizabeth Perrachione. They're two women still in my life. We just collect the stories. And then, as Women's Funds high net worth women in their communities, they sometimes would ask me to come there or they would fly that woman to meet with me and I would show them this book and go, "Would you like to be a part of the Trailblazer book?" And they would read, and found they'd go, "That's my tribe."

MONIZ: So can you talk about why this was an effective tactic for engaging high net worth women in high level giving?

HUNT: What shocked me is that, for years I had worked to raise money for women's foundations and [here, Helen LaKelly Hunt is speaking hypothetically] if I could talk, [say], Laura Risimini into a \$10,000 gift or a \$50,000 gift or more when she wrote that check I'd go, "Laura, thank you so much. This is going to touch people's lives. Thank you, thank you, thank you." And da da da. When this happened and I showed women this book and I said you could be a part of the *Trailblazer* book and they thought about it, they would start crying. And they would go, "Helen, thank you. Thank you so much." And they would cry. Often. They were so moved. Something pulled them into it.

I called Carol Gilligan, who is a feminist psychologist and I told her that. I said, "Carol, you've studied women's psychology." And I told her, "For years I've asked women for money and I thank them, but they see Women Moving Millions stuff and they say how do I join and thank you, thank you, thank you. Why do they thank me, and why are there tears in their eyes?" And she said, "Helen, you've helped women of power heal their dissociation. That women are so dissociated in a patriarchy. Women can't feel their feelings. Women can't find their voice. In a patriarchy they just feel that vertical energy where they're lower on the totem pole. And women have a net worth but they don't know how to use it. And when you say, write a million dollar plus gift for women's advancement, something inside, you've healed them psychologically and now they feel whole." They were in a special category and they couldn't really have friends and everyone would think of them as a checkbook and they didn't want to tell anyone they had money so they were anonymous givers. So it's really hard for them.

MONIZ: Okay. Can you talk about the work that Women Moving Millions does as a collective for women donors?

HUNT:

I will try. First, though, let me tell you one other thing that I am proud about. Maybe I'll mention two things. My strength was in eliciting—inspiring—the larger checks and I'm actually not the best person to talk about the question you just raised. I'll mention two things. What I did was, I was very influential in the writing of our material and again Chris Grumm and I both like the name of this initiative being Women Making History. But someone, and I don't know who, came up with the Women Moving Millions but everyone liked that better.

This morning, Janet Riccio (who's co-chair of the board) and another woman were at a marketing firm on Wall Street called Interbrand. And Janet and one other woman we hired to help us with our material. And I busted my butt. I'm really good with marketing. And finally, what came of this is, Chris wanted the material to say, “the Women's Funding Network da da da is an organization da da da and Women Moving Millions da da dad ...” and you know, the traditional kind of thing. This I'm so proud of. You put this in front of a woman [the material says “welcome to your place in history. We’re glad you’re here.”] And the way this all... I mean I did this with a committee but there was a lot of tug of war. [At] four o'clock in the morning before the launch, I was up editing this with our firm.

But others took credit. I would say to them, "What will make you feel appreciated, that you're raising the bar for women, giving like you are." Kathleen McCarthy called this "a new culture of giving." In the field of philanthropy, like AIDS funding, people didn't fund AIDS until ... or say funding domestic violence shelters or Jewish funding. Sometimes there's no funding for a subject, but then people come together and start saying, "There's a need," and say, "We need the funding." Anyway, Kathleen McCarthy said, "What you've done here, Helen, with your team, has created a 'new culture of giving.'" So we're making history with a 'new culture of giving' and I would say [to the potential donor], "You're a trailblazer doing this and so many others are going to follow. What would make you feel special?"

My contribution to Women Moving Millions was to inspire the giving, as opposed to where the funding went. The women, on their own, picked what they wanted to fund. One woman said, "Do you think Annie Leibovitz would come take our photo?" And I went, "I don't know." But one woman had access to Annie Leibovitz. Have you heard of "The Dinner Party," [by Judy Chicago]?

MONIZ:

No.

HUNT: Okay. So we had a goal. It was a campaign. Swanee and I catalyzed the campaign. She catalyzed it and I went to work. And she was there for whenever I needed help. And Chris and I decided that women's philanthropy had raised \$850 million (I'm so bad with numbers), and if the Women Moving Millions campaign could raise the last \$130, it would take us crashing through the billion dollar mark.

We had two years and we got our material and we had a press release or whatever it's called and we said, "Women Moving Millions is a global campaign. We're going to raise \$120 million in two years to take the Women's Funding Network crashing through the billion dollar mark." That was in 2007/2008. Right before the global economic collapse. Nobody was funding anything. And we kept going and we were the only philanthropic campaign that matched or exceeded our goal at the end of 2009. Those days may not be right.

So I did the campaign. And we had an evening at the Brooklyn Museum and I had all these women around and I said, "Okay. What'll we do to celebrate? That we did it! We did it! What do we do?"

A woman named Judy Chicago created "The Dinner Party." She set up something that was famous in the 1970s and 1980s to feminists. It was a whole table setting. And it was called The Dinner Party. And at each table setting was a great woman in history. And it was in a museum and the museum rotated around the country. A woman in Women Moving Millions has put a lot of money in the Brooklyn Art Museum and now The Dinner Party resides there full time. It's a table about half the size of this room with chairs around it and each place setting is a remembrance of a woman in history.

So we recreated "The Dinner Party" table and then every woman, as she came in and sat down, had a plate at her table with women in history and her name. Like mine has Helen LaKelly Hunt right here. Around not the current women today but all these women in history. And we said "You're making history" and Gloria Steinem came and she invited us to take our seat at the table of history, since Gloria's made history. And then Annie Leibovitz came that night. This is an Annie Leibovitz book. I called her and asked her if she would come and take the women's photos, and she went, "These are women giving a million dollars to women." I said, "Yes," and she said, "I'll come take the photo, and I'm going to waive my fee." And she did. And these are all the women who flew in to take their seat at the table of history because of their gift. There's one man here: Josh Mailman. My daughter, Leah, has become a donor activist and she was just with Josh and Monica.

[Looking at photograph] This is Abby Disney. Is this Abby? (I don't have my glasses). I think that's Abby Disney, who this morning spoke at the New York Women's Foundation. This is Barbara Dobkin, who'd given a million at the Women's Foundation. Margot Francine is from Canada and she was on the steering committee. This wouldn't have happened without about 10 or 12 other people. This woman was totally anonymous, for years. It was so hard for her to come out and she's just a spitfire. When Women Moving Millions moved from what we call a campaign to a community and Jacki Zehner took over ... that woman is just a spitfire on the board. This is Lauren Embrey, who just came up from Synergos Institute. Do you know what Synergos is? Because that's philanthropy? That's David Rockefeller's daughter. Anyway. This is Sallie Bingham, who started the Kentucky Women's Foundation and she had a falling out with her family and all of the family relationships ended and she got millions, at great cost. It shouldn't be that awful.

What I'm better at is inspiring people to come where they unleash their energy. This is Jennifer Buffett. The rule was, oh by the way here's Betty Regard. The woman could give to whatever they wanted to, as long as it was through a women's fund. We thought of regulating it. In fact, Swanee wanted to have a trafficking circle. Women who want to fund [efforts against] trafficking, let's do that together. Or da da da da. Let's do this together or that together. And Gloria Steinem said, "You all buy a television station. Let's not let men control the news. Just buy a television station." By the way, Gloria was phenomenal every time I called. I mean there were many people doing this [WMM] doing this that deserved credit. But anyway...

None of that happened. It was never planned what the money went to. The people in charge said, "No," to Swanee and "No," to Gloria. It was just always that the woman can decide what she wants the funding to go toward as long as she gives it through a women's foundation. And when it became a community, I was phased out, which was fine. I mean I very much expected to be phased out 'cause I'd done my thing.' Then it became [an official] board, and opened up beyond women's funds. A woman could come in and fund women here at the Smithsonian Institute, and that would count. Or women in anthropology at the Smithsonian and that would count.

MONIZ: So I'm curious, I know we're getting close to the end of our time, have you seen attitudes towards women, money, and power changing as you've been working on this issue?

HUNT: Not just synchronistic to women making money?

MONIZ: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

HUNT: Cheryl "Lean In". I haven't had time to read that book. I don't have time. I love to read. It's not because of this only by a long shot. I think in the field of philanthropy what I'm proud to be a part of is really the whole idea of the Women's Funding Network. That is, cross-race, cross-class, cross-socio-economic philanthropy and participatory philanthropy that is not the board or the foundation. It's the experts and they give to the lowly; people in need. The grantees are the experts. And this concept has completely transformed the field of philanthropy in my view toward a much healthier thing.

I think I'll also mention a woman in Women Moving Millions that came on, not in the campaign but later, Emily Nielsen Jones, says something that I think I feel and don't language from all language adheres. She just says, "I hate being in the 1%. I just hate it. There shouldn't be a 1%." And I respect her so much for having that much angst about it. There's something so wrong with the global capitalistic structure, where CEOs earn how many more times their salaries compared to the janitors and the cleaners and the parking attendants in the business. 400%. In America, it's a much higher percent of differentiation than in Canada or other places. People don't need that much money. They don't need that but it's structured that way. We should be embarrassed as a nation to have something like that.

I think this is a penance ... I'd like to think I'm trying to address the horror of being in the 1%. And I guess here again we all dissociate from feeling our real feelings about what it's like to have money come into you. There's such abundance, while the household cleaner and her family are never going to have enough money to send their kids to college. That's so wrong.

I think we're looking for structural change, not just ... we would like to change the structure so that there isn't as much poverty and there isn't as much injustice.

MONIZ: So that's what you see as the thrust of Women Moving Millions?

HUNT: That's what we'd like it to be. And the Women's Funding Network. We'd like to be a part of this structural change.

MONIZ: Let me ask you for a few final reflections. Is there something that you regret or that hasn't gone the way you hoped in your philanthropic career?

HUNT: There's something that I think would have been exciting for the Women Moving Millions to do at the next stage that they haven't done yet, but they might. I had a vision ... [In my view,] first there would be no Women Moving Millions community without Jacki. She was the only one that I felt could have gone in and pulled it together like she did, so I just have the highest regard for her. But she didn't do one thing that I thought would be a good idea. I thought the next stage for the campaign would be to create a global encyclopedia of women million dollar donors. And in this global encyclopedia, we would record, we would research women in every country who could be a million-dollar donor. And, no, no, no, I think research a woman in every country who has given a million or more to a woman's cause. I'd write them up. And just see how many we can find. And they don't have to become a member of Women Moving Millions but this is an encyclopedia of our research. Women around the world that had given a million or more in their country.

Well, I thought that would be neat because you'd have a community on paper and it might inspire the women to also show up. Or create chapters. Or whatever. They don't have to be responsible for anything. We just tell their bio and call them and say, "Is it okay if they're in the encyclopedia?" Anyway. Begin to lift up all those voices. And I think that would have been a great next stage.

MONIZ: Before I ask you a last couple questions, it seems like for you, storytelling is as much a part of your efforts as asking for people to write the big checks. It seems like they're intertwined, using the power of storytelling and asking for high net worth women to write big checks.

HUNT: That's very astute, that you say that that way. And, yes, because the check is connected to such an interesting story. But a big thing for me is the word, "philanthropy." "Philo" means love and "anthro" is humankind. To me, I've always said that women's philanthropy is all about love. It's all about a woman expressing where her heart is. And her love. We invite women into expressing their hearts. The story of why the woman wanted it to go in a certain direction and all that, I think, helps unlock other people's hearts as they read about that experience.

MONIZ: Can I ask what your proudest accomplishment is over your philanthropic career?

HUNT: I just really do feel that I've been used, that it's something coming through me, that I really haven't done any of this. That I'm sort of a vessel and I'm in the right place at the right time. That something's coming through me, that I've been willing to give my life to help happen. But the origin of it is someplace else or something else. I have no idea how to answer that question. 'Cause I sort of ... I couldn't have done anything, it's all about a "we." It's really a "we."

MONIZ: Final question. Is there an object that captures your philanthropic story?

HUNT: Oh, interesting. Well, I would maybe guess a vessel. A clay vessel, I think. In my faith tradition, you say to your creator, "You are the potter and I am the clay." And you try to yield yourself and let the potter shape your life. And so, I'm a clay pot.

MONIZ: Thank you. This has really been a stimulating conversation. I appreciate all the time you took.

HUNT: Thanks for your interest.