

**National Park Service (NPS) History Collection**

---

NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)  
Association of National Park Rangers Oral History Project, 2012-2016



Ginny Rousseau  
November 18, 2014

Interview conducted by Brenna Lissoway  
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen  
Digitized by Marissa Lindsey

This digital transcript contains updated pagination, formatting, and editing for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered.  
The original typed transcript is preserved in the NPS History Collection.

The release form for this interview is on file at the NPS History Collection.

NPS History Collection  
Harpers Ferry Center  
PO Box 50  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
[HFC\\_Archivist@nps.gov](mailto:HFC_Archivist@nps.gov)

ANPR Oral History Project

Ginny Rousseau

18 November 2014

Interview conducted by  
Brenna Lissoway

Transcribed by  
Teresa Bergen

The narrator has reviewed and corrected this transcript.

Audiofile: ROUSSEAU Ginny 18 Nov 2014

[START OF TRACK 1]

Brenna Lissoway: Okay, this is Brenna Lissoway interviewing Ginny Rousseau. Today is November the eighteenth, 2014. And we are in Albuquerque, New Mexico. And this is an interview for the Association of National Park Rangers Oral History Project. So, Ginny, if we could start by just having you introduce yourself. State your name and your date of birth.

Ginny Rousseau: Ginny Rousseau. Born October 25, 1946.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay. Great. So, I thought we'd start the interview, just have you talk a little bit about your background, growing up years. Where were you born and where did you grow up?

Ginny Rousseau: Well, I was born in Denver, Colorado. Weighted two pounds, four ounces. Not sure I should have survived. My mom and dad had owned a cafeteria in Charleston, South Carolina during World War II. And before the war ended, they saw the handwriting on the wall and sold it. They were actually on their way with a travel trailer to Alaska. And I came early and was born in Denver.

Ginny Rousseau: They moved on to Seattle, Washington, where my dad died when I was ten months old. My mom and I returned to her mother's house in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. And she proceeded to go back to Northwestern University to get her master's in accounting. So, she could get a job.

Ginny Rousseau: We lived in Maxton, North Carolina, where she taught at a university. Or a small men's college. And lived on the campus. I actually remember the room down the hall had a skeleton in it, and that really was spooky because that was the biology department, and I was scared of the skeleton in the room.

Ginny Rousseau: Anyway, I spent summers in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, which is technically middle Tennessee, if you know there's a middle, an east and a west Tennessee, with my grandmother and a number of cousins.

Ginny Rousseau: When I was, just prior to the third grade, the doctor said that I needed to get to a drier climate because I was in the hospital a lot because of bronchial issues. So, we loaded up, bought a Ford Rambler station wagon, and my mom had gotten a job in Tucson, Arizona, as a schoolteacher. So, by ourselves we traveled out there. Lived in a number of places in Tucson where she taught school and eventually got a job at Hughes Aircraft as an accountant.

Ginny Rousseau: My mom died when I was 13 years old and I went to live with some people she had met that had gone to Northwestern University at about the same time she did. They owned a ranch in southern Arizona. The Rail X Ranch. Walter and Helen Kolby were their name. they had three sons and a daughter, and I was just a year older than their daughter. The three boys went on to be very involved in politics in Arizona. Jim Kolby was a

congressman for Arizona for 22 years. And his brother John was a political editorialist for the *Phoenix Gazette*.

Ginny Rousseau: I lived with the Kolby's. Went to Cochise Junior College. Patagonia Union High School first, where we had 33 in our graduating class and played six-man football. Went to Cochise Junior College. Did some goat tying and some minor rodeoing. And then transferred to the University of Arizona, where I got a B.A. in education for elementary education, and a minor in anthropology.

Ginny Rousseau: The summer after my senior year in high school, I got a concession job up at Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Brenna Lissoway: What attracted you to even apply for a job at a national park?

Ginny Rousseau: I don't think I was even so much aware it was a national park. It was just a place that hired summer seasonals. And not knowing anything about national parks, worked as a soda fountain waitress. Made friends with a couple of park service seasonals who worked there. And one in particular, got to know his mother down in Sacramento. And kind of really was attracted to that area.

Ginny Rousseau: Graduated from college with a BA in education. Taught school for a year, or part of the year, in Eloy, Arizona. Or substituted for part of the year, then taught a year, third grade, in Eloy, Arizona.

Ginny Rousseau: Then decided that I really would like a change of scenery, be it bad relationships or whatever. Smart women, poor choices, that kind of thing. (laughter) So knew that I knew people up the coast of California. And I also had this long-term friend whom I had known back in 1965, he and his mother. And he was still at Lassen as a permanent maintenance man. Drove my little red, what's it, Ford Fairlane, up there. And got a teaching job in Redding, California. Sheldon Schuchman was the fellow's name who was a friend. And I basically stayed at his cabin up at Shingletown, outside Lassen National Park, until I got a job teaching. Would spend time up at the park and up at his area, Manzanita Lake.

Ginny Rousseau: Decided that I really didn't want to keep teaching because I liked the kids, but the teachers sucked. All they did was complain about the students. So, Sheldon told me that the district ranger at Manzanita Lake was looking for an information receptionist. And what was really funny is that the chief ranger and the district ranger came down to the school to interview me for the job. I'm not sure I ever applied for it. I just got the job. The district ranger was Dick Newgren. And I can't remember the chief ranger's name. Leroy Brock was his name.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I still didn't know what the park service was, but it sounded much better than teaching. And at the same time, they said, well why don't you take the FSEE Federal Service Entrance Exam, which was the test to get into the National Park Service for a permanent job. Sounded good to me. So, as I was working as a GS3 information receptionist, I took the test.

Ginny Rousseau: That summer it was really fun because I was wearing the little uniform brown dress with the white collar. Miniskirt at that point. White heels. And I would say, "Let me out behind the typewriter. Let me go patrol the roads."

Ginny Rousseau: So, they'd say, "Okay. Take one of the patrol cars and drive up to Summit Lake." Drive up and come back. That would get me out of the office. Well one of times coming back, I saw smoke. So, I got on the radio, not knowing any radio procedure. Said, "There's a fire! What do I do?" They said, "Well, go check it out."

Ginny Rousseau: Well, hiked up my little miniskirt and went running across the talus slope. And felt really good that I found what this was, a campfire that had gotten away. Not a big deal. Dick Newgren used to laugh and say that that was the first time he'd ever paid for a pair of high heels and stockings on a fire account. Because they got ruined.

Ginny Rousseau: Also got to go out on the firing range. And one time was on the range and had been doing pretty well shooting at a target. And that afternoon, the chief ranger came over and stepped into the spot where I had been. And I wasn't going to argue with him, so I moved down one. And we shot a round and all of a sudden, I look, and all my bullets had gone into his target, because I was so used to shooting at that one. (laughs)

Ginny Rousseau: So that was kind of some of my first experiences with protection.

Brenna Lissoway: Could I just back up and ask you—

Ginny Rousseau: Sure.

Brenna Lissoway: You said that you really didn't know anything about the park service. What were your first impressions? What do you recall thinking about, seeing rangers or being in the park?

Ginny Rousseau: Well, I can't say didn't know anything. My mom and I, when I was third grade through fifth grade, living in Tucson, would go out to Saguaro National Monument on Sundays. And she always said that to go out into the park was better than going to church. That it was much more of a cathedral and a spiritual thing. I did have some influences of it, but again, being the National Park Service, it was probably more the park system and what the park service stands for that I was imprinted with.

Ginny Rousseau: My first impressions don't think I really saw any difference because rangers then did not wear weapons. They did do different things. There were fire control aides, there were maintenance guys, there were protection. The thing that impressed me the most was that it was like a family. And not having a family of my own, that really attracted me. There was a maintenance chief and his wife lived in the park, at Manzanita Lake. And I'd go over to dinner at their house sometimes. And that really made an impression on me.

- Ginny Rousseau: Lived with a, we lived in a trailer on the Manzanita Lake side. And a young woman, Gay Knox, who I actually worked with again in Yosemite, we were roommates. And I really had, got a real good taste of seasonals working in a seasonal area. The maintenance and fire guys that lived in the trailer across the way had a chart on their refrigerator with a little mouse with hash marks of how many mice they killed. (laughs) So, but it was really, felt like there was something I could belong to. Something I could relate to. And I think that attracted me as much as anything else.
- Ginny Rousseau: Another ranger that was very instrumental, he and his wife, was Dick Powell, who was the sub district ranger. And he and his wife Sheila Powell lived in the entrance station house right next to the entrance station of Manzanita Lake.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, you had, you took the federal service entrance exam. And then what happened?
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, I got a letter in the mail from the federal service entrance exam people saying, "Congratulations, you got an automatic 100 on your test! The reason is, because you've graduated within two years, and you have a 3.5 grade point average."
- Ginny Rousseau: And I looked at that and thought, oh my gosh, they're going to come throw me in jail. Because I was very honest about putting down, I had a 3.5 average. University of Arizona judges on a 5-point system. So, it was a C-, not a B+.
- Brenna Lissoway: Uh huh.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, I figure the statute of limitation has gone by, and I'm fine. So basically, that's how I got selected. For actually one of the two classes that George Hartzog pushed through before there was going to be a freeze on federal hiring. He realized it was coming, and I think it was the Nixon administration was coming in. And they were going to put a freeze on all general hiring. And George Hartzog was the director and knew that he wanted to get at least two classes of 28, 30 people, I can't remember how many in a class, into the park service before that freeze hit.
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay. So, this was just a general intake—
- Ginny Rousseau: Yes.
- Brenna Lissoway: —class.
- Ginny Rousseau: They said on your application, do you want to do protection, I may have said law enforcement, but I think it said protection, or interpretation? I checked protection because I wanted to get as far away from interpretation and teaching as I could. I had no idea what it meant, but it sounded more fun than teaching.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, I got this letter saying you're going to be going into, and I believe it was a January class. So, I worked out my season at Lassen. Actually, at Lassen I was working as an information receptionist. At night I would go

over and waitress for the lodge at Manzanita Lake. And people would say, "Didn't we just see you in the ranger office?" So, we had some fun then. I'm not sure you could do that now. But at a GS3, it was another way to make a little more money.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. So, your class, you got into this class?

Ginny Rousseau: Got into, well, I actually, because I had some time between when I finished my season at Lassen and when I would start the intake program, I believe it was January.

Brenna Lissoway: January of 19, you said 1974? Is that what you said?

Ginny Rousseau: '73.

Brenna Lissoway: '73?

Ginny Rousseau: No. Probably, does it say on my, '73, maybe?

Brenna Lissoway: Looks like it would have to have been January of '72.

Ginny Rousseau: Okay.

Brenna Lissoway: No, I'm sorry, no, it says intake trainee, '73.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I applied and got a position as a tech, curatorial tech, at Joshua Tree National Monument. Worked out of the visitors' center. And basically, typed up catalog cards for the Keys Ranch, which is a property in Joshua Tree that they were doing a lot of research on. Didn't do any interpretation, but just did a lot of typing and cataloging.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah.

Ginny Rousseau: Asked to sit in on the defensive tactics class that they held at the rangers; the protection rangers held at the park. And they said, "Oh, no, no, no. We can't have any women in there."

Ginny Rousseau: Years later, I ran into the man. And I then was teaching defensive tactics. I was also a park ranger. That was kind of fun to say, "Hi! Remember me?"

Brenna Lissoway: Right.

Ginny Rousseau: But worked at Joshua Tree until I had to go to Grand Canyon. And then showed up in my little yellow pickup truck with a doghouse on the back. Shingled doghouse on the back. At the canyon. And we were in what we called the fatal fortieth session.

Brenna Lissoway: Why was it, why was it called the fatal fortieth?

Ginny Rousseau: Well, because our class, the administration had just changed. Ron Walker was the director of the park service. And they decided that Hartzog had tried to pull a fast one on them. So, they looked at, the classes. The one class had already gone through of his push to get people into the park service. And they decided that none of us had been properly interviewed before coming to the class. Well, this is about halfway through the class. People have given up jobs. They've moved. They've made all kinds of,

canceled all kinds of other commitments to come and become permanent in the park service.

Brenna Lissoway: So, had you had an interview?

Ginny Rousseau: I don't really remember. I don't think so. It was, do you want to work for the National Park Service, and do you want to do protection or interpretation?

Brenna Lissoway: Wow. Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: So, they sent a team of people out from Washington, DC to re-interview everybody in the class. They did not, would not take any input from the instructors, who had been dealing with us for, I believe it was a nine or 12-week session. Introduction to park operations is what it was. And I could figure out how many weeks that was. There were people from all over the country. There were people who absolutely did not know how to spell "national park." There were some long-term seasonals. So, it was a pretty interesting mix of individuals.

Ginny Rousseau: But because they wouldn't even let the instructors have any input into who might be a good candidate or not, they interviewed everybody at least twice. Then they cut probably a third of the class. And they were all white males. There was not one minority, or one female cut. There were a couple of people cut, one fellow in particular had a passion for history. Wanted to work Civil War, wanted to work any, some kind of a historic park. And they felt that was too specialized. Instead of realizing that we need those kind of people as well. The instructors when I was there was Bill Wade, Dale Thompson, Stu Croll, and Don Brown.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: But that was a pretty traumatic event for everybody.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah.

Ginny Rousseau: We had gelled as a class. And then to have it kind of ripped apart. The only person I remember on that team was actually Martha Spice out of the GW Parkway. And she told somebody later that that was probably one of the most fun experiences she ever had. Not realizing the impact, it had on us.

Brenna Lissoway: So, did they replace people?

Ginny Rousseau: No.

Brenna Lissoway: Or did, that was just—

Ginny Rousseau: That was just it.

Brenna Lissoway: Your class was just decimated.

Ginny Rousseau: Yeah. Interesting enough, there's a woman who I'm still very good friends with. She was Elaine d'Amico at that point, and now is Elaine Hall. But one of the things they did during our introduction to park operations, at



- one point they split the men and the women apart. And the men got to see the Yosemite Riot film. The women got a lecture by a Grand Canyon Airline, what do you call it, stewardess, on how to wax your legs and proper grooming. And there were some men that looked far worse than any of us did as far as their appearance in uniform.
- Ginny Rousseau: Larry Zoller was the chief of training at Albright. And Elaine Hall and I backed him into the women's restroom in such a fury that he better not ever do something like that again. Of how discriminating was, how inappropriate, and we basically had him for lunch. (laughs)
- Brenna Lissoway: So that had been a standard part of the course?
- Ginny Rousseau: It certainly was with our class. But—
- Brenna Lissoway: So how many other women were there? Do you recall? Were there many other?
- Ginny Rousseau: I'm guessing a handful. I'd have to go back and look at my either class picture or—
- Brenna Lissoway: Were they as outraged as you?
- Ginny Rousseau: We were probably the two most vocal.
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay.
- Ginny Rousseau: We kind of didn't, took names and didn't take any prisoners. (laughs) But it was just appalling that they would do something like that. And we never got to see the Yosemite film, at that point. But that was just kind of the perspective of women in the park service at that point.
- Brenna Lissoway: Right. Right.
- Ginny Rousseau: From Albright, we all went to George Williams College for, I'm guessing a week or two weeks of environmental education. And there a number of people from the previous class came back to kind of liaison and help us. And we'd crawl through swamps and did things with kids and went into the inner city in Chicago and worked with them. Kind of fun. Not sure what it really accomplished. But it was a good exercise.
- Ginny Rousseau: At that point, we all had to determine where we wanted to do, have our urban intake experience. They felt that park rangers needed to understand what cities were all about. So, we needed to each go to a city. I believe they were ones like Seattle, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, St. Louis, Tucson, New York City, and San Francisco.
- Ginny Rousseau: Elaine and another woman and Janie McDowell and I all chose Washington, DC. And we were on per diem. So, we rented an apartment, rented furniture for that apartment. And with three of us in the same room, we had plenty of money for per diem renting and getting by in a very expensive town.
- Brenna Lissoway: Why did you choose DC?

- Ginny Rousseau: Because that's where they made the permanent assignments from. And I felt if I was closer to the source, I might be able to have more input in where I would go after that.
- Brenna Lissoway: Huh. Okay. Do you think that strategy paid off?
- Ginny Rousseau: Yup. (laughs)
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay.
- Ginny Rousseau: I think it did. But so, I did a stint in DC. We all did something different. I think I started out, but I'm not sure of the exact sequencing, but I worked at Arlington House, worked on the George Washington Memorial Parkway. And one of the things that I'm still involved with today is I helped with Turkey Run Farm, which was an 18<sup>th</sup> century low-income farm that was run by the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It was just getting started. And in fact, I was there for their grand opening. It was to show how middle-class America lived in 1771. Not the George Washingtons and Mount Vernons, but how the common folk lived.
- Ginny Rousseau: The site manager, Anna Eberly, is still a good friend today. And we go back to what is now a private, private partnership. It's outside the park service now. But it's the Claude Moore Colonial Farm at Turkey Run.
- Ginny Rousseau: Kind of a sidebar, James Watt kicked it out of the park service, saying it had no national significance. And what happened is it became a private organization, nonprofit, and had people like Jack Fish and Bob Stanton on the board. And did far better than if it had stayed in the National Park Service.
- Brenna Lissoway: Hmm. Interesting.
- Ginny Rousseau: But Anna and I became very close friends. We cooked meals in the cabin. We sat outside in the summer and sewed costumes. And it's a pretty neat little area. It's evolved amazing over the years.
- Ginny Rousseau: I got a chance to go down to George Washington's birthplace, another very special little area. And Dwight Stork was the chief ranger at that point. And in fact, had let it be known that he would like to offer me an interpretation job there.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well at that point, we had to put down I believe like three choices, a number of choices. And that went to Pete Perry, who was in the Washington office, and in charge of determining who was going to go where.
- Ginny Rousseau: Another member of our class who has gone on and I've remained good friends with is Mike Tollefson. He was in our class. And again, our class, a number of us kind of had lifelong friendships. And probably because of some of the turmoil that happened early on.
- Ginny Rousseau: But anyway, so—
- Brenna Lissoway: So, you listed your choices.

- Ginny Rousseau: I listed my choices. But I also went to see Pete Perry. And I kind of politicked for Yosemite National Park.
- Brenna Lissoway: Why did you want Yosemite?
- Ginny Rousseau: I was 27 years old at this point. And I decided that I could learn far more in a year at Yosemite than in five years anywhere else. I felt like I had to play catch-up, because a lot of people were 21, 22, and just getting started. And I felt I was a little older and I needed to kind of get where I could get a lot of experience. And a very diverse experience.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, I got a job. I got two offers. I got the offer of an intake position at Yosemite, and also at GW Birthplace. And I happened to be down at GW Birthplace. And I remember it was drizzly and I was walking outside and trying to decide where was I going to go, what was I going to do. That this was going to be life changing. And decided that I had to follow my gut and my dream and go to Yosemite. Didn't know a lot about it, or what I was getting into. But that was my choice.
- Brenna Lissoway: And this was in a protection ranger capacity?
- Ginny Rousseau: As a protection ranger, GS5. It was a 5-7-9. And so that was, that was kind of—drove cross-country from DC in my little yellow doghouse to Yosemite.
- Brenna Lissoway: Wow. So, you arrived at Yosemite, this was in 1973.
- Ginny Rousseau: Uh huh.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, it was fairly, still fairly soon after the Yosemite riot that happened in 1970.
- Ginny Rosseau: Well, what had happened is they had brought in kind of an A team. They had cleaned house. And I'm not sure if we talked about this in Yosemite. But they had cleaned house and brought in a lot of heavy hitters. Not necessarily law enforcement hitters. But Walt Dabney, who had, he had been, what was Walt? Like a Freeman Tilden fellow or something like that. He was very well known, I mean, as far as, that's one I can look up, too, was what Walt was there for. Walt Dabney, Roger Rudolph, Dan Sholly, Tim Seneca, Jim Brady, Butch Farabee, Joe Abrell, Tony Anderson.
- Dennis Burnett: Jack Morehead?
- Ginny Rousseau: Jack Morehead was the chief. And the incentive to take a female or an intake is that Washington paid my salary for at least the first year, if not longer. And that was a good way to get cheap labor. Whether it was they wanted a female, I'm not sure, because they had had a female there, Donna Simms. And she left the park service. From my understanding, she kind of ruffled feathers and was a little abrasive with the guys. And the interesting thing is, Donna was a big woman. She should have been able to very much carry her own weight. And here I was, five-six and 100 pounds. So, a little intimidating to go into that kind of an organizational structure.

- Brenna Lissoway: Mm hmm. Yeah. So, you were the only woman on staff at that point when you arrived?
- Ginny Rousseau: Yes. Yes.
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay. So, tell me a little bit about what that was like.
- Ginny Rousseau: Um, I got a lot of training early on. Was sent through, at that point, Washington, DC was shifting the federal law enforcement training center from DC to Glynco, Georgia. It was in FLETC (Federal Law Enforcement Training Center). So, they had a real backlog of people that needed to get through that training before they could perform law enforcement duties. Well, Yosemite and Lake Mead cut a deal with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police—well, actually with, it was consolidating at that point from Las Vegas Sheriff's Office and the city PD were combining to make a metropolitan police department. They got permission for 11 rangers from Lake Mead and Yosemite combined to go through the academy. And it was accepted by, federal law enforcement training center said that's fine, because we know we have a backlog.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, 11 of us, number from, let me think, who from, Bob Patton, Ron Mackie, J.T. Reynolds and myself from Yosemite. Pete Nye, Skip Prange and Bob Marriott, I think were all from Lake Mead. So maybe that's seven of us. Maybe there were only seven. But anyway, I'll think of the other names. But again, the only woman.
- Ginny Rousseau: And we headed to a five-month law enforcement academy. Clark County is where it was. And what was interesting, Ron Mackie, who was kind of the old-timer in the bunch, was back country manager in Yosemite. And he was a little concerned about me going. And the first day we were in class – again, the only female in the class, whether it was metropolitan or park service – they were talking about lockers and where we change for PT and all this, and I raised my hand and said, "Excuse me. Where would you like me to change?" And they said, "Oh, you can change in the women's restroom down the hall." Ron Mackie came up to me later and said, "Ginny, I'm really glad you aren't one of those feminists that wanted to change in the locker room with the rest of us." (laughter)
- Ginny Rousseau: So, we had fun. The group of us that went through, there wasn't any, no gotchas. Nobody was trying to make anybody look bad. We helped each other with inspections, making sure everybody's uniform looked good.
- Ginny Rousseau: What was interesting is, the rangers did two things that really helped us out. And they never did figure it out. One, we got Lake Mead to issue us a second revolver that we could use for inspections. So, we didn't have to have them spotless clean after the firing range, and we always had a clean weapon. (laughter)
- Ginny Rousseau: The other was that a number of us had two pairs of boots. One for inspection. Well, one day I forgot my boots. So, one of the guys that was probably six-three, and had fairly large feet said, "I have an extra pair,

Ginny, if you want to borrow them.” So, I put his boots on and the sergeant never noticed that my feet were a little bit longer than what they should be. (laughter)

Ginny Rousseau: We had to memorize definitions. Definitions of probable cause. And I can still recite it today. If you didn’t do it right, you did pushups. We had obstacle courses. We worked with their SWAT team on practical exercises. Defensive driving. Everything that FLETC had to offer.

Ginny Rousseau: One instructor in particular, John Kinsinger had been an FBI agent and taught all our law. He was then working for the US attorney’s office in Vegas as an assistant US attorney. As it turns out, years later, when we got to Lake Mead, he would let us prosecute cases through the state system, because the magistrate’s courts didn’t want to deal with our piddly little cases.

Ginny Rousseau: So again, it was, I took advantage of working in a place like Las Vegas. And would ride patrol with the sergeants on the police department on weekends. I had to sign a waiver. I wore a shoulder holster under my jacket and was very proud that I could do that. Saw my first dead body. Saw my first gunshot wounds. So really tried to get as much experience as I could.

Ginny Rousseau: The rangers rated out probably the highest in the class academically. But everybody got along and there were no issues of being the only woman, other than, when we would do calisthenics, I’d be in the back going, “One, two!” And they, even the sergeants couldn’t keep a straight face. My nickname from Yosemite was Squeaky. (laughter)

Ginny Rousseau: But one thing, just to touch on, is the uniform.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: I think I may have mentioned it on the Yosemite ones. But Jim Brady got me involved in the National Uniform Committee while I was at Yosemite. And up until that point, I had gone down to the uniform suppliers Alvord and Ferguson in Merced and had them cut down a man’s shirt or tailor a man’s pants so I could wear them. Because you can’t do patrol in a dress, really. And the pockets of the men’s shirts tucked into my pants, they were so big. I’d come up with a cross tie, which I was berated for by many women later on because they said, “We want to be just like the men and wear the straight ties.” But I was heading to a parade in Sonora with horse patrol. The guys all had their Ike jackets on and shirt and tie. And I stopped in and said, “Do you have any kind of tie that will go with the shirt that doesn’t look like this green dickey that really isn’t very formal?” And they said, “Yeah. State park has a cross tie.” I said, “Great. Let me borrow that. Or buy that.”

Ginny Rousseau: So anyway, I went to Washington and Jim and Jack, Jim Brady, Jack Morehead, Kathy Dilonardo from Philadelphia and I were all on the committee. And put our proposals forward to Gary Everhardt and Bill

Briggle, who were the director and deputy. And interesting, I can remember, I had Alvord and Ferguson tailor a Class A uniform for me, and had some Pivetta 5 boots, which were highly polished, or cordovan, high shine. And what we were trying to do was not only get women in the gray and green, same as the men, but also to say everybody could wear Vibram-soled boots with the Class A uniform. Until then, up until then, you had to wear the slick-soled shoes. And if you were on patrol in Yosemite and had to run up the talus slope, it was a real liability.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I remember standing up on a chair or on the table in this outfit to show them that the shoes were shiny, and it looked good with the outfit.

Brenna Lissoway: Uh huh. What was—oh, go ahead.

Ginny Rousseau: They asked me to type up all the notes from the meeting while they pulled out a bottle of scotch and had a drink afterwards. But it didn't matter. We got what we wanted, which was women in the gray and green and the Vibram-soled boots.

Brenna Lissoway: So, were there other discussion that you recall about the uniform? While you were in that meeting?

Ginny Rousseau: Oh, gosh, this went on—

Brenna Lissoway: Concerns that were expressed?

Ginny Rousseau: It went on over a number of meetings.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: This was kind of a final. But we had met a number of places to try to pull together. A woman who was extremely instrumental in the uniform, the history of the uniform in the National Park Service, is, oh dear, what was her name? Dee? Oh. I can't think of it. I will, and I'll get back, that's one of those I'll look.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. You can add it.

Ginny Rousseau: Fabulous woman. Worked later in the process.

Dennis Burnett: Linda Bellotti

Ginny Rousseau: Linda Bellotti. That's who it is.

Brenna Lissoway: Linda Bellotti. Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: She, and this to tell you, was probably a GS5, a 3, 4, 5, so she had to work at Safeway to supplement her income. Probably the most instrumental person in getting us good uniform standards and vendors of anybody. Nobody else could have done it. But it was really interesting, because we were really conscious of having good quality uniforms. Of course, everybody always complains, "The women's pants don't fit me." They're too big in the hips, or they're not big enough in the waist, or their legs are too big. But it was sure a far cry from the polyester tan and white, or the green polyester that they wore for years.

- Ginny Rousseau: Basically, we paid attention to detail. How big were the pockets? Could you get a pocket notebook into it? The little orange fire notebooks that so many of us carried. Had the yellow pages with the grid on them. Which everybody carried because that's what you jotted down information on at an incident.
- Ginny Rousseau: I remember Jim Brady standing under Yosemite Falls in a Gore-Tex jacket to see just how waterproof was it. So, we really paid a lot of attention to the quality and what was going to be the best use for us.
- Brenna Lissoway: And the discussion of style?
- Ginny Rousseau: When it went back to pants, at least we weren't worrying about a dress at that point. Needless to say, I ran into one other obstacle on the uniform thing when I was pregnant with my daughter and son in the park service is that at that point, there was no maternity uniform. So, I had to wear green jeans, leave them unzipped, wear suspenders underneath and wear a black turtleneck and a gray shirt that was hemmed around the bottom. So, it kind of had to catch up.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, you were satisfied when you left the uniform redesign? And it sounds like you—
- Ginny Rousseau: I was on the committee for a number of years. I worked with who managed the national uniform program Linda Bellotti and then Bill Halainen. Other committee members were Kathy Dilonardo from Philadelphia and Jim Brady and Jack Morehead in the mid-1970s. I was able to help get women into the gray and green and out of the tan Stewarts outfits.
- Brenna Lissoway: Oh, okay.
- Ginny Rousseau: And it was kind of like a work in progress. We eventually took in working with Cape Cod. We took in lifeguard uniforms. Had swimsuits and that kind of thing. We got more specialized. I know they've dropped a lot of those since then, because I don't think there's enough orders for it. Walt Dabney and Bill Halainen and I were actually on, I around 1990 a uniform poster that we went down to VF Solutions to put together.
- Dennis Burnett: R& R
- Ginny Rousseau: Or R&R. It wasn't VF. It was R&R. and then what was fun was a number of years later, with VF Solutions, I got to go be the uniform Nazi. And we picked three, Gary Hartley, Jill Hawk and John Anthony from Blue Ridge Parkway, who were the models. And I was in there going, no, no, no. Your hat has to be two fingers above your eyebrows, and don't tip it, and is there a nickel between your name plate and the top of the pocket? A nickel's width. So, I was kind of the uniform Nazi. (laughter)
- Brenna Lissoway: Well, it's an important part of the ranger image. Right?
- Ginny Rousseau: It is. And as anybody that's worked for me has always said, "Ginny's death on wearing your hat."

- Brenna Lissoway: Okay. So just backtracking to, finishing up your time with the Las Vegas, the seasonal academy or sorry, the police academy.
- Ginny Rousseau: Police academy. I had an interesting, I was actually thinking of leaving the park service and joining Las Vegas Police Department. Got a lot of positive feedback. A lot of people were interested. I was pretty good at it. What was interesting was I was at that time an eighth of an inch too short to meet their height standards. So, went back to Yosemite.
- Ginny Rousseau: Yosemite was a tough arena to grow up in at a ranger, especially at that time. Part of it was that everybody that was there was so much better than I was. But they'd been there longer. But those were my role models. And I was constantly comparing myself to, my skills to theirs, and being frustrated that I couldn't get better fast enough.
- Ginny Rousseau: There were a number of years that every time there was a rescue or a search, it was kind of like, "Ginny, go cover the road." So, I didn't get some of the opportunities that maybe other people might have. There was some discrimination. But at the same time, I asked to get into this. And it's kind of like you know what you're stepping into, and you better be able to just suck it up and deal with it.
- Brenna Lissoway: Mm hmm. And one thing I should, just for the record, state that you and I did an oral history interview in 2008 that specifically dealt very in-depth with your Yosemite time. So, if anyone's really interested in getting more dealt about that period, that's a really good resource for that. I did want to just ask you, you mentioned that the guys that you worked with at Yosemite were really kind of your mentors?
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, they weren't my peers. But I felt, I'm not sure I got a lot of mentoring.
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay. Who did you look to? I mean, you were such a trailblazer. And there weren't a lot of women to look up to in those protection roles at this point.
- Ginny Rousseau: I remember going into a campground incident early on with Walt Dabney. And probably one of the best talkers and kind of silver-tongued devil. He and Rick Smith had that reputation. Both could just walk in and talk a line in a situation. But he would walk in, cross his arms, and go, "Okay. What's going on here?" And I went, I can't do that. That isn't going to work for me. I'll get laughed out of the campground. That's one of the reasons I rode patrol so much in Las Vegas was to get exposure to different types of situation, so I had something in my tool belt. As we tell the kids at the academy, at NAU, where I teach, you need to build your tool kit. And you pull out what will work for you.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, what I found was, instead of confronting things head on, for instance, in the campground I could go in and, say, a noisy camp site or after hours quiet, things like that, is going and saying, "Have you all seen any bears?" They'll stop immediately. You get their attention. You talk about bears



coming in and raiding ice chests and all this. And then, “Oh, by the way, do you realize we have quiet hours here? And you need to keep it down. And campsites are not like houses that have walls, your neighbors can hear what you’re doing.”

Ginny Rousseau: So, I kind of started to develop a way of coming at things differently. John Dill, somebody who should be interviewed at some point if he’ll sit still long enough, the SAR Czar of Yosemite, taught me to climb. That was amazing. Two other fellows, Dan Acey and Doug Weens, who worked for the concession teaching skiing, took me out after a very bad experience with the rangers, where I got hypothermia and, you know, struggled a lot out on a winter trip, took me out and made me build a snow cave with them, and made me sleep in a tent out in, and taught me some winter survival skills. So, I wasn’t comfortable asking the rangers to do that for me. But I found other resources.

Ginny Rousseau: And like I say, as things shifted in Yosemite, people like Rick Smith became a shift supervisor. And he very much pushed me. Like I say, had my first encounter where I would have shot somebody. Because he and I were out looking for a fellow who had a gun. He approached the fellow. Didn’t see that he had a gun in his overalls pocket. Fellow pulled it out and was going to just hand it to him, but I didn’t know that and neither did he. And I yelled, “He’s got a gun!” And I knew that I would have to shoot if the fellow raised it up like he was going to use it. Fortunately, he kept it down and handed it.

Ginny Rousseau: But Rick pushed me. He got me involved in searches and in rescues, more so than I had in my first few years.

Ginny Rousseau: Jim Brady was the district ranger. And he would run with a number of us and run backwards going, “Okay, come on, you can do this.” And you’re running as hard as you can, trying to keep up, while he’s zigzagging back and forth and making comments about how his groin hurts, or how he just doesn’t feel up to things today. (laughs)

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I did eventually get some real opportunities. And I guess the thing is, I chose to go into that male-dominated field. And really felt that unless it was something so overt that you couldn’t ignore it, that it was just up to me to suck it up.

Ginny Rousseau: I went through the horse program. I was the first woman to go through the horse patrol program. I was the second woman to go through Scripps. Butch just figured that out.

Brenna Lissoway: What’s Scripps?

Ginny Rousseau: Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Scuba diving training. I swam for three months at the lodge pool, trying to get myself in shape. And also took a scuba class, what was it, 40 hours, at least, I think, in Fresno, to be sure I could pass it. Before going to the one at Scripps. Because I didn’t want to

fail. I didn't want to get sent home because I couldn't do it. When you get there is you have to do a swim test. And one of the hard things is you have to swim two lengths of the pool, down and then back, on only three breaths. And that takes a lot. So, I wanted to be sure I could do that.

Ginny Rousseau: Again, another great experience. I remember the guys helping shake me into my wetsuit, because it was so tight. But really good, positive feedback. Jim Stewart, who ran that program for the park service for years was just a, the god of the sea, so to speak. He dove with me one time and that was just like, oh my gosh. First thing he did was rip my gloves off so I could feel things. He says, "You've got to be able to feel." An amazing man. So, I was very fortunate.

Ginny Rousseau: The horse patrol taught by Walt Castle at Yosemite didn't approve of women around the barn. Didn't think any should go through. Fortunately, I had grown up as a youngster in middle Tennessee riding and also on the Rail X Ranch when I lived there. So, I did have a pretty good seat, and knew how to ride, so that helped. Actually, park police sergeant—

Dennis Burnett: Dennis Ayres.

Ginny Rousseau: Dennis Ayres came out for our final test; Dennis managed the Washington, DC horse program. And threw things at the horses. Firecrackers and all kinds of stuff. And we had to go through a number of exercises. But I did it, and I felt I did pretty well.

Ginny Rousseau: Always felt I never was quite where I should be. Because again, I compared myself to the people that had been there a number of years longer. That kind of A team that they brought in after the riots.

Ginny Rousseau: A number of folks came in after I did. Kathy Green, Jim Lee, J.T. Reynolds. And I still always compared myself to that other group.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Yeah. So clearly you had decided that you liked protection. That was the career field that you were pursuing. Can you talk a little bit about how you decided to leave Yosemite? And where you went to from there?

Ginny Rousseau: Sure. One other thing that I forgot was that one thing which kind of took me full circle, I'm not saying I didn't want to teach anymore, was one thing someone had told me and I agree with it, is you need to find something that you can excel at, that you can become an expert in. So, I got Yosemite to agree to send me to a defensive tactics instructor course down in Santa Ana, California. It was under Robert Koga, who was a police officer with, he was in Santa Ana, or I think he was with LAPD. And he had developed defensive tactics for police officers, which were based on aikido, karate and jujitsu. And so, he had started a number of classes on training police officers.

Ginny Rousseau: I went down, I think I went to 80 hours. The first 40 was a beginner. And the second 40 was like an advanced. And it was handcuffing, baton work, ground fighting. Again, the only woman in the class. And the only park service person. And so, Robert Koga didn't quite know what to do with

me. Because again, he didn't approve of women, either, being in this type of work. But by the end of the class, when I left, he presented me with a wooden baton that had been his. So, I felt I at least had succeeded in at least holding my own on that.

Ginny Rousseau: It was funny because when we would do throws and things like that, I was only 100 pounds. And these guys were used to throwing these big guys. I would go sailing across the room. (laughs) It's like, remember I'm not that heavy. But it was great training.

Ginny Rousseau: From there, I really started doing a lot of training in Yosemite on defensive tactics. I'd teach a 40-hour beginning, another 40 intermediate. And did a number of sessions while I was there as an instructor.

Ginny Rousseau: Again, I loved teaching. Which you couldn't have convinced me that way back when. But it came around to that.

Brenna Lissoway: And this is something that you continued throughout your career?

Ginny Rousseau: I continued to do that throughout my, at least quite a way into my career. And did some teaching of horse patrol training in the Smokies, from having gone through Yosemite. My husband and I developed a 40-hour program that we taught there in the Smokies.

Ginny Rousseau: So, the teaching kind of came back into my life. Later on, I went to supervisory training. Situational Leadership. And was on a teaching team. But I'm jumping ahead. (laughter)

Ginny Rousseau: So why did I leave Yosemite? Well, one thing I decided in Yosemite was that I was not going to date park rangers. Because as the only woman there, at least the only permanent one and one in protection, I was very cognizant of appearances. And that it was really important to kind of be one of the guys. Didn't have to be exactly like them. But certainly, did not want to mix personal life and professional.

Ginny Rousseau: Another training I did which really gave me an outlet was search and rescue training with Lemoore Naval Air Station. Well, that was where I could go. And train with the guys during the day, and then go out at night with them. (laughs) Because kind of what happened at Lemoore stayed at Lemoore. It didn't come back to the park. I spent about 60 flight hours with them, rappelling out of helicopters, and just having a great time.

Ginny Rousseau: Up until we were on a flight and all of a sudden, we got a call, "We want you to return to base."

Ginny Rousseau: We went back and found out that one of the maintenance guys had just got in a casual conversation with the crew chief and said, "You know, I noticed some oil dripping out of the tail rotor." And they turned us around, and it was almost empty. And if we had gone on to what we were going to do, possibly would have crashed. And I decided maybe I'd done enough training at this point with Lemoore. (laughs)

- Ginny Rousseau: But so I kind of broke my own rule. I met a seasonal ranger, Dennis Burnett, in Yosemite who lived in Camp Six. Chris and Paula Andress, Chris was seasonal and had been hired by Jim Brady from Tetons. Or Yellowstone. And had come to Yosemite. He eventually got permanent. And Dennis worked day shift and I worked night shift. And so, it was kind of like two ships passing in the night, never the twain shall meet.
- Ginny Rousseau: But at some point, his roommate, I think, told him I liked him because he hadn't picked up on the clues. (laughs) And we decided that we wanted to be together. So that was a huge commitment. Dennis did not have permanent status. I had been permanent. So obviously if anybody was going to leave, I would have to follow him because he needed to get three years for lifetime reinstatement rights.
- Ginny Rousseau: Dennis got a subject to furlough job in Yosemite. And then was one of the last people on an intake register that was picked up for Lake Mead as a permanent subject furlough, no, permanent full time. Obviously, at that point, if you were on subject to furlough going to a permanent full time is a much better position.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, Dennis accepted the job at Lake Mead. And I decided to go. Not knowing, it kind of was a very hard decision. I remember my last night on duty, Chris Andress says, "Ginny, are you going to come in off patrol?" Because it was one o'clock or two o'clock and I needed to go in, and I just kept driving around the valley. And didn't want to give it up. But decided that was what I wanted to do.
- Ginny Rousseau: Dennis and I got married in the valley. I took my EMT test the night before my wedding. At midnight at the clinic. So, kind of pushing the envelope on all. (laughs)
- Brenna Lissoway: So, you were married at Yosemite Valley before he left for his new position?
- Ginny Rousseau: No, he left—
- Dennis Burnett: January
- Ginny Rousseau: January. And came back in April. He went to Petrified Forest. He went to Petrified Forest as a permanent. While going from Yosemite Valley is a huge adjustment. We got married in April, in the Valley. And hooked up a U-Haul and took, he had taken part of my things when he moved his permanent assignment from subject to furlough in Yosemite to Petrified Forest. So, he took the washer/dryer and a big load of my things, since we were going to be living together, to Petrified Forest. So, we had a U-Haul and took what was left.
- Ginny Rousseau: But a difficult decision. But the thing that I think made it acceptable, or doable, was that Dennis and I both respected each other's trials and tribulations of getting into the park service and building a career. So, there wasn't a feeling of either one of us had to give up for the other. It made sense that I follow him until he could get his three years in permanent. But

then, and as we've talked in our dual career interview, we very much supported each other in developing our career. It slows it down a lot, because I think I was a GS9 for seven years, 10 years, going from permanent intermittent to whatever. And as you move up, it's harder and harder. But the fact that he was supportive and felt that there was value in my career and what I wanted to pursue; we were on equal footing. So, we decided to try it.

Brenna Lissoway: What do you think is the biggest thing that you took with you from those Yosemite years forward in your career?

Ginny Rousseau: A quote from, several things from Jim Brady, mostly, was that management by walking around; do something, not nothing; and the other thing was to, don't accept mediocrity. And I think I carried those through my career of just don't accept status quo. Do something. Do something that's of value and that, it doesn't matter if it's risky, it doesn't matter if somebody doesn't do it. Don't let them tell you, you can't fire people. You can. As one of my employees said, "Ginny, you shouldn't hold us to your standard." (laughs)

Ginny Rousseau: But I think the fact that, and what's interesting is I went to a conference or a Rendezvous after we had left Yosemite. And still wasn't convinced that I had really done what I needed to do or had the respect of people, that I could really hold my head up, that I really accomplished some things.

Ginny Rousseau: And Butch Farabee grabbed me at a Rendezvous and said, "Ginny, come here. I want you to talk to this fellow. He's writing an article about rangers." And he says, "I want him to meet you because he needs to know what you went through. And that you had a tough time, but you succeeded."

Ginny Rousseau: And it was like, wow. If Butch thinks I did okay, then I felt pretty good about it. Other than Butch was the one that had to tolerate me coming back from a rescue that I went on with Dan Dellings and in tears in front of him in the radio room saying, "Butch, I screwed it up so bad. Somebody could have gotten killed!" (laughs) Because I felt I hadn't performed well. Nobody got hurt. We got down. But I was beating myself up, and Butch had no clue what to do with this woman in tears in his radio room.

Ginny Rousseau: But working with the people like that, that was really a, it set my path as what I wanted to do, how I wanted to perform, and I wasn't afraid of anything. Mainly because I'd been through some hell and I'd come out the other end okay. Not that terrible.

Brenna Lissoway: Are there any other difficult situations that you want to talk about that you feel are significant? Where you learned something?

Ginny Rousseau: Going on a rescue where I was the first person on scene doing CPR for 25 minutes or so in a pool at the bottom of a waterfall where a kid had gone over. With braces, no less. Doing CPR on him with braces was kind of interesting. And Tim Seneca arrives and immediately took over the SAR.

And I remember almost jumping up and down going, “It’s mine!” (laughs) But you know, the guys would have parties and I wouldn’t be invited. It wasn’t overt. It was more I wasn’t included. So, I never, I always felt I was kind of on the outside.

Ginny Rousseau: Now, years later, I don’t have problems with those folks. We see each other. We get together. It’s not worth carrying a grudge on anything or thinking, you know, gee, I don’t like them because of how they treated me. It just was what it was. I remember getting handcuffed to the briefing room table. But that was fun because it was all with seasonals and we were goofing around. So again, there were no malicious, mean-spirited. It was more just I wasn’t really a part of the team.

Brenna Lissoway: How did you handle that?

Ginny Rousseau: I had a lot of friends that were the seasonals. And that’s, Dennis, Chris Andress, Paula Andress, gosh, Larry Potts, Bruce Binge. A whole group of folks over at Camp Six. I would go over there after a shift. Most of the other guys were married. Well, Roger wasn’t at that point. But you know, they really kind of ran together. It’s interesting, because even Butch, when we told him you should talk to Larry Potts or something like this about Yosemite and what their impressions from working as seasonals, he couldn’t remember who Larry was. I really—those folks accepted me. I was a permanent. They were seasonal. And they were all men. But we really had a good rapport. And it was fun.

Ginny Rousseau: J.D. Swed. J.D. and I got the nickname of Starsky and Hutch, because we got into so much shit. (laughter) I was the campground supervisor. But J.D. and I just would get into all kinds of things. With bears. With dope. With whatever. And we had fun. We’d set bear traps in the campground and go pick up bait from the Ahwahnee Hotel. And they’d give us whole slabs of prime rib and ribs. And we’d sit on the tailgate of the pickup truck and eat what we wanted before we’d put it in the bear cage.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I did have a group I could go to. That group and then also the concession group that these outdoor, Ned Gillette, like I say, Dan Acey, Doug Weens, really supported me. And I remember when Jim Lee came. Again, a very neophyte on ranger skills. And the chief ranger wanted him to do a transcontinental or—

Dennis Burnett: Sierra

Ginny Rousseau: Trans-Sierra ski trip with them. Jimmy hadn’t skied in his life. And I thought, they’re setting him up to fail, just like the time I’d gone on this winter excursion and gotten hypothermia and got very embarrassed because I felt I didn’t do well. So, I got Jimmy to go take some ski lessons from the guys. And I also gave him a list of here’s exactly, you need to take all this with you. Remember to change your inner layers as often, so they don’t get wet. But again, to help him not fail or feel like he did. And he did fine. So, I guess that, I did have groups, these outlets that were

- supportive of me to help me scratch my way to where I felt I was competent.
- Ginny Rousseau: John Dill. Again, he was park service, but not really. And he's the one that taught me to climb. So, I was really fortunate in many ways.
- Ginny Rousseau: And, I'm glad there was that good of a group kind of ahead of me that I could aspire to. Because if it had been a mediocre group, then where would I get my models of what I wanted to be able to do? So.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, tell me, so then, yeah, what was your next position?
- Ginny Rousseau: (laughs) Petrified Forest National Park. I believe they picked me up permanent intermittent. Again, this became kind of the story of our careers was going from permanent to permanent intermittent, back and forth as we juggled careers. At Petrified Forest, because I had done horse patrol, I did some horse patrol. I did, again, car patrol. But it was pretty easy after Yosemite.
- Ginny Rousseau: We weren't there that long. Dennis had gotten an offer from Point Reyes. But then, right as we were getting ready to leave Petrified, I think we were only there three months. We got married in April—
- Dennis Burnett: Left in August.
- Ginny Rousseau: Left in August the following year to go to—
- Dennis Burnett: The same year.
- Ginny Rousseau: The same year to go to Lake Mead. And he had gotten, he'd accepted the job at Point Reyes. But then Lake Mead called and offered him a permanent GS9. Well, that's a no brainer. They did offer me a permanent intermittent. Or seasonal, I can't remember. One or the other. They agreed to let me work. No, I couldn't work with Dennis, but I could work at Overton Beach, which was just north of where we lived at Echo Bay.
- Ginny Rousseau: It was great. I got boating skills. I had my scuba. I did some, not a whole lot. But I did a lot of boat patrol. A lot of road patrol.
- Ginny Rousseau: Again, it was similar to Yosemite, except you didn't have the backup you had at Yosemite. Yosemite, anybody needed help and there was at least, always a handful of rangers around. I do remember Butch coming to my rescue in Yosemite one time of campground situation where we had a really rowdy group. We had tried to pull one guy out to arrest him, a campground patrol fellow John Blackley and I. And he jerked away. And wasn't fighting, he wasn't attacking us. He was just trying to get away. (laughs) Ended up throwing me under the car. I rolled—again, 100 pounds. Doesn't take much. So, we called Butch. The guy took off. We tackled him and are in the middle of the road. And I see these headlights come. It's a VW bus, which Butch had. I see these boots come up. And right in front of my nose he says, "Do you need any help?" And I go, "No! We're just fine!" (laughter)

- Ginny Rousseau: So, but anyway, so Lake Mead was a little different because you were pretty much on your own. As we talked in the dual career one, I would go back up Dennis on a late-night motor vehicle accident or bar incident because it just wasn't safe for one person. So, you really learned, you got a lot more EMS. Or not a lot more, but different EMS. Somebody falling off a cliff, very different from a motor vehicle or a motorcycle accident or a boat prop cut. So, a lot of different types of situations.
- Ginny Rousseau: The thing about Lake Mead is, because the clientele is so close to Las Vegas, they don't have a conscience. Many of the bad guys that we would interact with did not have a conscience. And they wouldn't care what they did to you. So, you were pretty cautious.
- Ginny Rousseau: I worked Overton Beach. There was a great little campground. And all the little snowbirds who camped there were always giving me fish filets of crappy. Because they loved to catch them, but they didn't like to eat them. So, they'd filets them for us. And we had a freezer full of fish.
- Ginny Rousseau: But Lake Mead was good. I mean, it was a good experience. The chief ranger didn't particularly care for women. I did teach defensive tactics there as well. But I remember going into the office one time and he says, "I'd just like to see you try and arrest me." And it's like, really? What am I going to do?
- Ginny Rousseau: Jerry Yarborough was there. Big teddy bear of a man. And he and I taught defensive tactics together. Kind of a Mutt and Jeff approach to it, so it was kind of fun. But, no. Good, good times.
- Ginny Rousseau: We lived in a little cinder block house. And to get away from the park, we'd go up to St. George, Utah and camp. Because if you were there, Dennis was low person on the totem pole. The phone would ring, and he'd have to answer it. So, you got away from the phone.
- Ginny Rousseau: We used to listen to late night radio, stories of the Lone Ranger and these mysteries that were on the radio as we'd drive back from Henderson till, we got home. And then sit in the driveway until the story was over. It was just about an hour. But if we timed it wrong, we'd have to sit and listen to the end of the mystery on the radio. So, some fun times.
- Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Yeah. So then, so you were at Lake Mead until 1980? So, for a couple of years? And what was your next move?
- Ginny Rousseau: We were at Lake Mead 1978-1980. Well, Dennis still did not have three years in as permanent. So, it was still his turn. And unbeknownst to the park, I was pregnant. So, I kind of couldn't leave at that point. But Dennis was looking again to move up for a little different experience. And applied for—
- Brenna Lissoway: Do you want to pause for a minute?
- Ginny Rousseau: Yeah.
- Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Okay. [pause] Okay, go ahead, Ginny.



- Ginny Rousseau: Okay. Dennis did not still have his three years permanent. So, our next move was to Great Smoky Mountains. Assistant Chief Ranger of the park, Bill Wade.
- Dennis Burnett: Assistant Chief Ranger.
- Ginny Rousseau: Assistant chief ranger Bill Wade called. And basically, he had been my instructor at Albright when we went through this fatal fortieth. I'd gotten to know he and his wife Karen Wade very well. And Bill was assistant superintendent. And he hired Dennis as the back-country ranger for the North Carolina side of the park. And he hired me as the permanent campground manager.
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, we packed up our VW bus, I think, at that point, yeah, because we bought it in Vegas. And headed to Smokies. There we lived on the North Carolina side of the park in Deep Creek inside the park. I was, as I said, pregnant with my daughter Linsay. And worked up until she was born in Silva, North Carolina. And actually, it was great. I mean, Dennis managed the back country. He had horses. We did a couple of excursions up to Washington, DC to pick up horses from the US park police for the operation. We took Linsay with us.
- Ginny Rousseau: But after Linsay was born, I decided that I really had, I was 34 years old. And this was my first child and I thought I probably needed to spend some time with her. The permanent campground supervisor job didn't hold up to that. So, I resigned. Knowing that I had lifetime reinstatement rights.
- Ginny Rousseau: The problem with that was all of a sudden, I had no identity. I'd worked so hard for so many years to be Ginny Rousseau the park ranger that here I was Ginny Rousseau a housewife who didn't have any identity or didn't even know how to identify with being a housewife.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, I would introduce myself to people, very, very pregnant, as, "Hi, I'm Ginny Rousseau, a park ranger." (laughs) I was terrified! This, my whole image, my whole self-esteem, had been tied up in working so hard to be a ranger. And all of a sudden, I wasn't one. And that was a really hard adjustment. But—
- Brenna Lissoway: Did you intend to go back at some point?
- Ginny Rousseau: Oh, yeah. That wasn't a question. But at that point I felt it was important to be home with her. Like I say, I got to help teach. We taught a horse patrol class. I taught defensive tactics at what was then the Sylva Seasonal Park Ranger Training Academy. So, I still kept my fingers in it. We had one big event was interesting is that there were a number of people who camped outside the park, right outside the park boundary, toward Bryson City. And Dennis got a call one day that a woman, Polly Melton, was missing. Now this is an older woman in her probably fifties. I'll say older. (laughs) That seemed old then. She and her husband had a trailer. They'd been coming there for years. It was a whole network of people that all had

these spots. And she and a number of ladies went for walks down that administrative road, actually, along the creek, and turned around and came back usually even day. Her husband was an invalid. And she was missing. Two people she went walking with, when they turned around, they said, “Well, we want to walk a little faster, and Polly—”

Dennis Burnett: Polly did.

Ginny Rousseau: Polly walked faster and was ahead of them and she never went back, got back to the campsite.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, they reported it. And this is the kind of women that walked in dresses, you know. Not pants, hiking shoes, that kind of thing.

Ginny Rousseau: So, we threw Linsay in a backpack, and Dennis and I started a hasty search to look for this woman. That search went on and on and on. I became the liaison with the family and people that were there. Bottom line, she was never found. Which is really kind of mind boggling. We checked, they checked all kinds of did she, could somebody have kidnaped her? Could she have left the park with somebody else? All were dead ends.

Ginny Rousseau: I think a number of years later, they thought they found her because somebody cashed one of her social security checks that had been going to her husband. And they thought maybe it was her. Well, it was somebody from the nursing home.

Ginny Rousseau: But anyway, we’d throw Linsay in a pack and I’d go help.

Brenna Lissoway: And you were, not as an official employee.

Ginny Rousseau: Not as an official anything. But again, I had the experience. It never dawned on me I shouldn’t do that. Nobody said no, you can’t. But that was a hard period, because all of a sudden, my whole identity turned around.

Brenna Lissoway: So, when did you decide to reenter the workforce?

Ginny Rousseau: What’s next? We were in Smokies. And I got a call from Sequoia National Park, from Tom Tschohl. He asked me if I would be interested in a position at Lodgepole as one of two sub-district rangers. Now let me tell you, two sub-district rangers in the same thing doesn’t work. But we looked at each other. Dennis had his three years in. And said, you know, maybe it’s your turn. So, I accepted the job. Well, they hired Dennis as permanent intermittent because of all his experience. And they were willing, we were both going to be up at Lodgepole, a fairly isolated spot, and they could use, Dennis had a very strong background in structural fire and a number of other things, so they were going to take advantage of that.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, what they did, because I had resigned, is they hired Dennis as permanent intermittent and they moved him to Sequoia. And then picked me up when we got there.

- Brenna Lissoway: Ah.
- Ginny Rousseau: That led to a whistleblower who said, number one, we weren't married. Number two, I wasn't qualified for the job. But that we had to prove that yes, here's our marriage certificate. Oh, and that was had done an illegal move, which we hadn't.
- Ginny Rousseau: Sequoia sub-district ranger, I was, again, pregnant when we got there with my second child. But that was kind of where I really cut my teeth as a supervisor. I supervised the Wolverton ski area, the campground, Lodgepole and Dorst campground, and the fire operation. George Leone was the other sub district ranger and he was in charge of patrol. And I'm not sure, front country and back country. So, search and rescue, stuff like that. That was his bailiwick.
- Ginny Rousseau: So that was where I really learned or honed my skills. Learned on the people at Sequoia. We did some pretty neat things. We had to shut down the campground because a young boy had been bitten by some fleas from a rodent and had gotten bubonic plague. My campground staff were not thrilled about putting on these white suits and going out and dusting traps and catching rodents. (laughs) They were convinced they were going to get it. But they didn't. But we had to do that.
- Ginny Rousseau: Still ended up working a lot of motor vehicle accidents. Because in the winter, as it ices up, people slide off the road. So, a good range of types of activities.
- Ginny Rousseau: Again, this park were very accommodating. Boyd Evison was the superintendent. My old sub district ranger, Dick Powell, was the safety officer there. Tom Tschohl, at that time bachelor, was the sub district ranger. And Randy Coffman was there. So again, we had a really good group of people.
- Ginny Rousseau: One thing that when we would have search and rescues that, I don't think they, Tom didn't like, but it made sense to me, we had a number of people, interpretive specialists, Greg Fauth, and what was Nasiatka first name? Jeff Nasiatka. He worked sewage treatment plant there. Extremely strong cross-country skiers. We had a search; I'd send them out as my hasty team. Tom would say, "Well, why don't you send George? Why don't you send somebody else?" I'd say, "Because we don't have anybody that's as strong as they are." I think I learned that from Brady, is it doesn't matter who it is. If they've got the skills, you use who the best people for the job are. We had a real good group there.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, let me ask you this.
- Ginny Rousseau: Sure.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, this was your first opportunity to be a supervisor.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, I supervised in Yosemite.
- Brenna Lissoway: You did.

Ginny Rousseau: The campground.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: So, I did have some supervision under my belt. But this was kind of a first time of, my skills were pretty honed and now I can really work on developing my supervisory skills.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay. So, let me just ask you just a general question about who were some really good supervisors in your estimation in the park service? Or if you don't want to name anyone in particular, what do you feel made a good supervisor?

Ginny Rousseau: I can tell you good for sure.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay.

Ginny Rousseau: Rick Smith. Jim Brady. People that, number one, cared about their people. Backed them up. But held them to a high standard. Had expectations. Didn't throw them under the wagon – and gave them credit. Let them take credit for ideas they had, instead of you taking the credit. To promote employees. That came across very strongly in Yosemite with Rick and Jim, especially. I used to say I can count of all my experiences in the park service probably three good supervisors. Which is probably not real good. But that's who I patterned myself after.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Well can you talk a little bit about what some of the bad supervisory traits were? Without naming names, if you don't—yeah.

Ginny Rousseau: Uh, sure. Bill Wade, not on the bad end, but Bill Wade also was a real influence. I think it was a Jim Brady one, though, was manage for selective disobedience. You want people to do the right thing. To not say, "It's not my job." Think outside the box which I think Bill, I know it's not his saying, but he promoted that. To really get people to think in different ways, how can we do it, not we can't do it. So those are, and again, that's that Yosemite influence of those high-performing people that impacted me early on. I had a great campground staff. In fact, Em Scattaregia was the lady that was my campground lead in Lodgepole. And I remember when the chief ranger, Bob—

Dennis: Smith

Ginny Rousseau: Smith, wrote a memo without consulting us that, at Lodgepole campground, because of the bear problems, because it was a freeway of bears coming through the campground every night, it was a migratory route and they just built the campground in the wrong place. But Bob Smith wrote a memo that said in the campground, fee collectors would store people's ice chests in the kiosk. And we went, are you nuts? Number one, we don't staff it all the time. We don't have room for it. And how do we do a check in/check out?

Ginny Rousseau: I remember Em came over to the house with a gallon of milk and a box of ginger snap cookies. We wrote a response to Bob Smith on why this

probably, here's another way to go at it. So again, I felt like I was a fairly participatory supervisor. And certainly, didn't micromanage. Em and I worked as a good team together. I still didn't have, because I had some search and rescue experience from Yosemite, didn't get out as much as I'd like to have. That wasn't probably my strongest suit, so I would tend to send people I knew that were much stronger out as they hasty teams. Instead of going myself. I think I really tried to let my staff do things, as opposed to me jumping in and taking over. And that followed into the regional office job. That followed into Shenandoah.

Brenna Lissoway: Okay. Other challenges for you at Sequoia?

Ginny Rousseau: Managing two kids and working full time. I took time off. But Bryant, our son, which as you know was born in our car halfway down the mountain in the middle of a snowstorm. We delivered in our car. I nursed him through nine months and went back after probably after three. I think I was on maternity leave for two or three months. Dennis actually took over my job and did my hiring and that while I was home with Bryant. There was a real, again, tear, between should I be at home? Dennis was extremely proficient. We had our first microwave and he got really good at cooking microwave meals. Not frozen ones or that, but real meals in the microwave. Managing this newborn and two-year-old. But always that kind of tear between I'm not there enough, I need to be at work, I need to be at home. And that just was something that was kind of ongoing.

Ginny Rousseau: Managing the Wolverton Ski Area was really a great opportunity. I had to learn not only the first aid piece, I mean, we had to manage the first aid hut, which was not a big deal. But I also got involved with the ski lift inspections and that kind of thing.

Ginny Rousseau: I remember when they brought in a lady from a search who was hypothermic. Again, they brought her into Wolverton before they transported. And I was the only one that would crawl in the sleeping bag naked with her to get her warm. (laughs) I figured, I'm another female. At least I can soften that blow. So, it was kind of what you do for the job.

Ginny Rousseau: Sequoia was, like I say, I was torn not just because should I be at home, but also because I knew Dennis was frustrated with not having a real job. And this is something that kind of followed us through our career. It seemed like, until I got to Grand Canyon, one of us did not have a really good job. We were doing it so the other one could have the job they wanted. But we had to be 3,000 miles apart for both of us to have jobs we really thought were good. So that was hard as a couple. Loved Sequoia, though. I mean, it was a fabulous, fabulous place to work.

Brenna Lissoway: So why did you leave that park?

Ginny Rousseau: Linsay, our daughter, by that time was ready for preschool. Dennis had been driving her down to Visalia, which was two and a half hours, in the car, to take her to preschool two days a week. He would take Bryant and

put him in the backpack and walk around the shopping mall until she got out of preschool. So, we knew she was going to end up in kindergarten. At that point, she would have started kindergarten the next year. Lodgepole is not a place where you can get a bus to kindergarten. We would have had to move to Three Rivers, where the headquarters was. We explored options to move to Three Rivers. At that point, they just said, "No, we don't see any opportunities for you." Or for one of us or both of us. Little disappointing.

Ginny Rousseau: But so, we started looking at other jobs. One other incident that was a really good one at Sequoia was, that was right before one of the sequesters, where they shut down the government. And we had a young man who was shot and killed in the back country. He and two friends were out playing soldier. And the bottom, Dan Mason and I investigated. And the bottom line was, we didn't know if this young man had been executed by one of these two other boys, or if it was an accident. The story was he'd been playing Russian roulette with a revolver. Did not have a respect for guns, his mother had never let him handle one. Another kid had brought the guns who did know weapons. And the kid was spinning the barrel and playing at shooting himself. Well, he did.

Ginny Rousseau: They shut down the government and Dan and I said, "I'm sorry, we're going to keep investigating because we can't let this go." But again, a wide variety of types of incidents.

Ginny Rousseau: I did more concession inspections there, which was something I hadn't done a lot of. And so, kind of was rounding out a lot of the skills that I had.

Brenna Lissoway: Mm hmm. So, your next park was Jefferson Extension Memorial?

Ginny Rousseau: We left Sequoia in November 1985 and headed to St. Louis, Missouri. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site. JNEM. Dennis, because we felt we needed to get schooling for Linsay. Again, I'd had the primary job. It was his turn. So, he applied and got the assistant chief ranger job at the Gateway Arch in Saint Louis. We moved in December 1985. And our first clue that there were issues is, well, all the way across country, we would stop at malls to let the kids run, because it was too cold outside to let them out of the car. We got to Saint Louis, checked into a motel, and the next morning it was minus 72 degrees wind chill. The car wouldn't start. There was ice on the inside of the motel front window. And we had towels piled against the crack in the door, and every sleeping bag and down coat we had on. Had to put the fleece away, because fleece didn't work in that kind of cold temperature. It's like, what are we doing here?

Ginny Rousseau: That was interesting because all of a sudden, kind of like when I was pregnant, I was at home with these two kids. Having gone from a sub district ranger to I got picked up, I think permanent intermittent. But until we got settled, I didn't work. Dennis started work. And here I was.

- Ginny Rousseau: We were out of a house for nine months, I believe. We rented a condo from a park ranger that worked there. Didn't have any furniture. He lent us a few pieces. And then we housesat for somebody and took care of their house. But we had to pay. Which seems kind of interesting. Finally found a house. But by this time, it was like, we had to go to thrift stores to buy summer clothes. Because we had gone from winter to summer, and everything was in storage.
- Ginny Rousseau: The good news was, we found a great little house in Webster Groves, in an urban environment, but a very nice community. We had done our research and found that it had extremely good schools. And we got the kids, at least Linsay initially, and then Linsay and Bryant both, into preschool. A Montessori preschool.
- Ginny Rousseau: I worked pretty intermittent at the Arch. But I didn't work enough, so I started working at Schnuks Grocery Store as a checker. Bad thing about that is you bring every germ in the book home. So, I was sick a lot.
- Ginny Rousseau: What I found at the Gateway Arch was that it's really hard to go from being a supervisory park ranger GS9 to a permanent intermittent who they say, "Go patrol." Your opinions, your suggestions, are not real well received. And that's hard to step down after you've been in a position where you've kind of been in charge.
- Brenna Lissoway: Let me ask you, too, you know, what was the transition like working, because previously most of your experience had been working in a quote unquote "natural" park, right?
- Ginny Rousseau: Mm hmm.
- Brenna Lissoway: To go to an urban area like that? I mean, how did your skills transfer? How did you kind of make that adjustment?
- Ginny Rousseau: Having worked Yosemite is almost like working in a small city. The people, you've got homeless people, you've got vagrants. Not a lot different, actually, than the people that hang out and dig through the garbage cans in Yosemite. You don't have as many opportunities, obviously, for your search and rescue and your EMS and all those, because you've got medical right there. You don't have many searches or rescues.
- Ginny Rousseau: In fact, it's interesting, because the population of Saint Louis really did not want people to know that the Gateway Arch was a national park area. They would just as soon have people think it was a city park. There were no signs on the park that said, "National Park Service." Until you got down into the museum and things like that. So, it was an interesting environment.
- Ginny Rousseau: I enjoyed, we enjoyed, I think, living in Webster Groves. It was a very nice community. We went to church there. Our kids got into activities. It was great. We got them into gymnastics and swimming at the YMCA. We

had an opportunity to join the Y and do things, things you don't get when you're in a national park.

Ginny Rousseau: So, other than the traffic, you know, back and forth commuting, I think we enjoyed it. It was a nice place to sit for a while. And we knew we wouldn't be there forever. But like I say, it was a hard transition.

Ginny Rousseau: However, one of the good things in there, it was kind of as they were working me less and less, the Midwest region, Flo Six, who was in a training position in region. Bill Wade had just come up with a courses for the National Park Service on Situational Leadership. And they wanted to put together regional teams, or teams from each region, to go back and teach this situational leadership for the park service. I had, because of my education background and, again, defensive tactics and horse patrol and all these other things I'd taught, and the point that I'm not working in a fulltime job that pulls me away from something, that was a real opportunity. So, Flo selected me as part of a four-person team to go to Albright to be trained, it was a train the trainer for situational leadership. And Bill Wade and Rick Tate were the instructors. That was fabulous. That was a great, again, it got me back into a lot of interaction with people. We would usually two of us or three of us at a time go out and teach a 40-hour supervisory course. We did it all over the region. We did it at Lincoln Boyhood, we did it, like I say, all over. And that gave me something to get my teeth into. I really professed that type of supervision and managing and the principles that go along with it. Yeah, there's buzz words and you change the buzz word, it doesn't matter. But still the fact that you supervise people differently based on where they are in their development made a lot of sense.

Brenna Lissoway: So, did you do that until you left?

Ginny Rousseau: I still worked some—

Brenna Lissoway: Jefferson?

Ginny Rousseau: For JNEM but mostly did a lot of the training for the Midwest region. From there, I think Dennis, we were both, he kind of wanted a change. Felt he'd done as much as he could. And he applied for a job as the south district ranger at Cape Cod. Dennis went out on a fire. And after he left, I got a phone call from Tony Bonanno on Cape Cod that wanted to offer him a job. I called the airport wherever he was going for the fire and had the airport page him to call home immediately. And he says, "Well, what do I do?" I said, "You call and tell him yes." You know? By the time he got home, I'd sold the house. In six days. So, again, that long wait—

Brenna Lissoway: You were ready to go.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, not just that, but the long wait to get a house that we knew would be marketable when we wanted to leave. It was perfect. So, we were off again.



- Brenna Lissoway: And so, what was the opportunity for you, then, going to this new place? Was there a discussion about how that would work for you?
- Ginny Rousseau: Yeah, there was. And at that point, there was nothing at Cape Cod for me. But at JNEM Nicky Lindig was the administrative officer. And actually, I'd been doing some work for him in administration. Typing up contract stuff and things. I'd kind of shifted more from out of the protection function to helping out in other divisions. And Nicky Lindig, there was a brochure, the only one I've ever seen, on dual careers in the National Park Service. And basically, saying that if possible, parks should try to accommodate for moves or things like that. And Nicky figured out that he was willing to put me put on a year's leave without pay. And still maintain my position. I was on a year's leave without pay. So that gave me something to hold onto. So, with that thought, figuring okay, I've got a year, then, to find something once we get to Cape Cod, we'll go for it.
- Ginny Rousseau: The trip across, again, it was like December, I think. And our travel trailer almost went off the freeway because of the snow. And we went, what are we doing, getting into more of this?! I remember Bryant or Linsay hadn't seen snow that much from St. Louis because it's sleet, it's wet, it's ugly there. And I think it snowed, we pulled off and stayed in a motel until the weather cleared. But I remember them going out and, snow! It's clean snow!
- Ginny Rousseau: So, we got to Cape Cod. We lived in park housing in Wellfleet, in the headquarters area. Again, trying to fit furniture into a 900, well, the house at Lodgepole was 900 square feet. We basically had wall to wall furniture. Because I had furniture my mom had given us. We had combined two households, Dennis and I living independently. So that was kind of fun. We'd gotten a few things in Saint Louis while we were there. But here we were in a Wellfleet house. Pretty cold and musty. But a fun place. Good place for the kids to grow. A little frustrating for me because there wasn't anything at that point. I'd been working with, I think I did some supervisory training for the region, I believe. But there weren't a lot of options. I was working with Rolf Diamont from the Olmstead Park in Boston to possibly pick up something there. But my year was dwindling away. Kids were in a good place. Bryant in preschool, Linsay in kindergarten.
- Ginny Rousseau: And again, I got kind of this fortuitous phone call. Actually, I didn't get a phone call. But a position at Albright Training Center came open. And that was something that I really wanted to do. It was the protection position. J.T. Reynolds had been in it previously and had left and gone to Northeast region. So that was the one. Frank Buono was there as the wilderness kind of instructor. And Woody Harrell was there as the interpretive. And Jeff Karraker.
- Dennis Burnett: Dave.

- Ginny Rousseau: Dave Karraker was the superintendent at Albright. And boy, to go as a protection specialist! Dennis looked at me and said, "If you don't do it, you'll regret it the rest of your life." How do we do it? Again, how do we make it work? We talked to counselors, doctors, anybody we could think of. How's this going to affect the kids if Dennis is in Cape Cod and I'm in Grand Canyon? And they basically said, just keep the communications open and they'll do fine.
- Ginny Rousseau: So that was a very tough thing to do.
- Brenna Lissoway: Yeah, I can imagine. So really, the attraction to you of that position was what, exactly?
- Ginny Rousseau: It was a grade, a grade increase. But it was to really be able to teach, again, kind of going around, no, I don't want to do any teaching, but here I am, back around. To be able to teach and influence new people coming into the park service in protection type functions. The Yosemite way, the way of setting a high standard, doing it the right way. Not being mediocre. Not being status quo. And that was pretty neat. I mean, it was an opportunity to bring in those people that I knew were experts. Bringing in Randy Coffman from Sequoia, Todd and Scott Berkenfield from Tetons and Kip Knapp from Joshua Tree to all teach a week of search and rescue. Which combined three different ways of doing things. But it really exposed the kids to a lot.
- Ginny Rousseau: I taught supervision. We gave intake rangers 40 hours of supervision. I mean, who ever heard of training somebody before they're a supervisor on what to do? So that was the kind of, you know, that was just a real opportunity.
- Ginny Rousseau: In fact, it was funny. When we were at the Ranger Rendezvous up in Estes Park in 2004, I ran into one of my Albright kids that I had taught in ranger skills. I still follow a number of them. So, it was an opportunity to help make a difference. To teach it the right way. To not the macho end of it, not the heavy law enforcement end of it, but not the status quo, either. So.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, do you want to talk a little bit about any of the challenges that you had in that teaching position? Other than the most obvious, which was being so far from your family?
- Ginny Rousseau: I'd get home every 10 or 12 weeks and fly, and again, we had this discussion. I'd fly somewhere in the U.S. to meet Dennis and the kids. Sometimes I got waylaid. But one of the challenges was that Woody and Frank, Woody was married, and so had a home life. Frank was very compartmentalized, so to speak. Probably the most amazing instructor on wilderness law that there is in the park service. But when he went home, he went home. Again, I kind of filled that role, not the mom so much, but there to go out with the kids, to go out with the instructors, to be there if they needed somebody to talk to. So, it wasn't like we were dividing it three ways. It was kind of like I picked up that now because I took it, also

possibly they felt they didn't have to. But that wasn't kind of their personalities.

Ginny Rousseau: Challenges, actually during the teaching, each class has their own synergy. And you have different challenges depending on who's in the class and what the issues are. I remember, what was his name?

Brenna Lissoway: We'll pause. [pause] Go ahead, Ginny.

Ginny Rousseau: One of the challenges was when someone from Washington or FLETC would try to interject a student into the class who really shouldn't be there. Again, usually it was a diversity candidate. I remember one time, Flip Hagood, who was at FLETC, sent us a young man from Howard University. A black school. This young man was an exceptional criminal justice major. But the problem was, he was the top of his class. At Howard University. But had absolutely no understanding or no skills in anything to do with rangering. So, Flip sent, put him in the class of introduction to park operations. No, it was ranger skills by that time, I think. And this kid just crashed and burnt. He was antagonistic. He was defensive. He was so uncomfortable that he just couldn't deal with this complete change where he wasn't the top cream of the crop. And it was disastrous for him. So that was pretty hard, when somebody was inflicted on us that really, it was totally outside his comfort zone.

Ginny Rousseau: Each class, again, brought their own challenges. But we ran some amazing instructors. Bill Gwaltney, who probably was the lead on living history and black history in the park service, came and taught. We did a here's how to be an interpreter. The kids all had to give an interpretive program. They had a week of protection type stuff. We did many scenarios of bank robbery or whatever. So, we really got a well-rounded – Frank taught the resource law end.

Ginny Rousseau: Willy Unsoeld, an amazing man who had climbed Everest, and had no toes because he had frostbite, came and spoke. And as the kids in the class said, he articulated so much better than anybody in the park service on the spirit of what the park, what the park system is all about. The reverence for nature, for the environment, for, so we had some amazing people come through.

Ginny Rousseau: We had two people from Pennsylvania that taught, it was either writing or, Mary Badami, that was her name. And I can't think of the fellow's name that taught with her. But they did an amazing communications piece that was fabulous. So again, getting to, we taught a lot. But we also were able to pull in these exceptional speakers to kind of share what is the heart and soul of the park service. And they weren't always park service people that articulated it better. Rick Smith used to say, "I believe in the park system, not necessarily the park service."

Brenna Lissoway: What do you think he meant by that?

Ginny Rousseau: That the park system is, you take out all the politics, you take out the, just all the personal dynamics of it. But the organic act and what it stands for and what it means is why most of us are passionate about it, about our jobs. That can be very different from the park service, which you may or may not approve of the supervisors, the directorate, the politics. But the park system is why we're all here.

Brenna Lissoway: That's interesting. What do you think were the big differences between when you went through your Albright experience as an intake, you know, new park service employee, and then coming, then to be an instructor? How had the curriculum changed? Or anything? What was different about your time? Do you want to pause?

Ginny Rousseau: One of the big differences when I went through Albright, it was introduction to park operations. I went through again when actually Dennis got a chance to go as a new permanent employee for the National Park Service. He had probably one of the more dynamic teams of instructors: Rick Smith, Ron Thoman and Jim Brady. And you couldn't beat that team. That, again, that set a standard to what I aspired to when I went back as an instructor. I didn't have the same peers. But that was my standard for how—

[END OF TRACK 1]

[START OF TRACK 2]

Ginny Rousseau: —should be taught. Jim Brady was outrageous.

Brenna Lissoway: Can you give me some examples?

Ginny Rousseau: Can I [unclear] a story? No. (laughs)

Brenna Lissoway: Oh, please do.

Ginny Rousseau: When I went through with Dennis, and actually I sat in the back of the classroom and did kind of compare. The numbers of weeks changed from Intro to Park Operations, which was really long. It was 12 or 15 weeks. When Dennis went through—

Dennis: It was 12.

Ginny Rousseau: It was 12 weeks. Ranger skills had started cutting back. I think we started at 12, and then it, I think, got down to about nine. So, I'm sure it was budget-driven at some point. But it really depended who the instructor, the cadre of instructors. And again, it was like old home week with Jim Brady and Rick Smith, who we'd worked with and I'd worked with and who had been my mentor in Yosemite, were there as instructors. So, it was just fun. Their dynamics and synergy just carried it. Again, outstanding instructors. And that again set a standard for me that I felt I needed to try and raise to.

Ginny Rousseau: When I went again, it wasn't quite the same. When Dennis was there, one of the things I did was go on a hike with three ladies. We had the time. And one lady said she would do the planning, so we left it up to her.

Carolyn Wakeman, who married Joe Evans, so she was Carolyn Evans at that point, came over and was going to do the hike. So, the three of us decided to do a hike, fairly difficult one. Four, there were four of us. And I can't think who the fourth person was.

Dennis Burnett: It was Marcie.

Ginny Rousseau: She was a nurse that worked out of the canyon. We hired a fellow to take us in on the Navajo reservation. To drop us off on what was, I can't think of the name of the trail. [Added later: The Salt Trail Canyon to the confluence of the Little Colorado River and the Colorado. We visited the sacred Hopi Sipapu.] But it basically went in from the Navajo reservation, down to the confluence of the Little Colorado and the Big Colorado. That was a tough hike. It went from cairn to cairn to cairn, not necessarily trail. We realized as we were into this that if anybody got hurt, we were out of luck. Because you had no cell coverage, you had no radio coverage or anything. And one of our people decided it was a forced march and wanted to really push it and see how many miles they could do a day. That wasn't why the rest of us were on that hike, so we had little conflicts there. We had t-shirts made up that said, "A woman's place is on the bottom." That had a canyon on it. (laughs) And again, fun in many ways, but really not what I was looking for as far as a really fun, enjoyable hike. It was kind of a marathon. A fabulous thing that I'll always remember was getting to crawl up to the edge of the sipapu, which is the, where the, especially the Hopi feel that their ancestors came up from the world beneath into this world. And if you looked inside, there were prayer feathers all stuck in the different layers around the cone. I got heat exhaustion. Crawled under a bush and stayed in the shade for a while until I could recover.

Ginny Rousseau: We hiked out the Tanner Trail – I think it was a five-day hike – we hiked out Tanner's Ridge. Had got halfway, spent a night, and then came on out. And poor Dennis comes into the room going, "Well, how was it?" (laughs)

Ginny Rousseau: As I burst into tears, saying, "I could have died!" But anyway, that was quite a, quite, I mean, I had taken hikes in the canyon and later, when I was an instructor, and one of the things that it really made me realize is I would always take the group, the kind of reluctant hiker group. The ones from back east who hadn't hiked, those that didn't have any experience, and made it fun. We'd go down the Kaibab to Phantom Ranch, spend a night there. Come up to Indian Garden, spend the night and then come out. And made it fun for them so they felt, so they succeeded. So, if nothing else, that hike really imprinted on me that it should be fun and you need to encourage people to feel success, to feel that they succeeded.

Ginny Rousseau: But the program at Albright changed over the years. Like I say, by the time I got there, we had not done law enforcement scenarios. We did not do a week of search and rescue training. Which, like I brought in people to do. We did do some interpretation and some things like that. But again, it

wasn't as hands-on, I don't think, as it was when I went through. No airline hostesses telling you how to wax your legs. Of course, one lady in the class had raised her hand, Betty McSwain, said, "Excuse me, how would you do that when you were in the back country?" (laughs) Poor lady. It wasn't her fault. But she had a very suspect audience there. But anyway—

Brenna Lissoway: Were there challenges in the park service at that time that you all were particularly cognizant about, that you wanted to try and help prepare the classes for?

Ginny Rousseau: I'm not sure. Not that I, other than the political interjections on occasion. One thing that was going through when I was at Albright was, they started the facility maintenance leadership training. And Kevin Cann was the person out of Washington who spearheaded that. Rick Shireman took it over after he did. But one year, one time we ran dual classes of the facility maintenance folk and the ranger skills folks. That was kind of like oil and water.

Brenna Lissoway: How so?

Ginny Rousseau: Because the ranger skills kids were untried. They were newbies in the park service. There was no guarantee that they would last in the park service. And in fact, a lot didn't. We'd invested all this money and time into them, and a number of them left to join other agencies. Or do other things. So, I'm not sure that was, again, money well spent. With facility maintenance, they were people who were already tried and true. They had been identified as potential chiefs of maintenance as their next move. So, they were stars. Again, a huge maturity difference. A huge experience difference. Loved the maintenance guys.

Ginny Rousseau: There was one woman in the maintenance class one time, Sue McGill, who was the only woman who went to Smokies as chief of maintenance. She went to Olympic as chief of maintenance. Very successful. She had some interesting stories on being one of the first women in maintenance, as a maintenance chief. She would be an interesting person to talk to.

Ginny Rousseau: But I identified so much more with the maintenance guys. Again, more peers. More people that were already on their road. They knew where they wanted to go. Some fabulous – I remember a Rendezvous after those facility maintenance classes got going, I heard a lot of grumbling with the park rangers of, "Those damn maintenance guys are going to become the superintendents!" And they did. And they were good. So again, they were professionalizing, as years later with Ranger Careers we were trying to professionalize. And so, did resources, actually, took a big leap. And interpretation with fundamentals and trying to, so every branch was kind of becoming more, more insularly, maybe? Instead of a ranger does everything, more specialized. And unfortunately, not knowing what other divisions did. That's probably one of the bigger changes that I saw.

- Ginny Rousseau: The Ranger Skills kids didn't know what they wanted or what they were going to do, so they were just getting into it. But that was a big thing when I was there as an instructor was this professionalization was just starting to roll.
- Brenna Lissoway: That's really interesting. How do you think that's affected the park service overall? That specialization emphasis.
- Ginny Rousseau: Good and bad. I think where in Yosemite we were darting bears, not maliciously, but without a clear understanding. And we were ODing a lot of bears because we didn't have the training and the expertise on bear management. We needed science-driven decisions as opposed to knee-jerk decisions by management. I think the more, the problem was that in the older days, a ranger did everything. In Yosemite, I went out and checked fuel moistures for the fire house. You did maintenance type things. You cleaned toilets. You did whatever. You didn't just have a specialization of, as now you ask a young person, "What do you do?" "Well, I'm law enforcement."
- Ginny Rousseau: That is a tool in their belt. Which I keep saying, "You're a protection ranger, not a law enforcement ranger." Law enforcement is one of the tools you have. But it's not the end-all, be-all. We're much more on a, and we've had to be, because of just the way the organization is, with 6C coverage. Again, I think Dennis talked about this. With you have to have 51 percent of your job is law enforcement. That really cuts out a lot. That cuts out your opportunity to move, say, from a protection ranger to, say, a resource manager for a few years, and then back to protection. Or to a chief ranger job. A lot of rangers were being told, "You aren't qualified to be a superintendent because you only have protection." And where in essence, that protection role gives you a lot more, because you deal with logistics, you deal with emergencies, you dealt with communities and all kinds of things. But that's not recognized as that.
- Ginny Rousseau: Maintenance, pretty much you usually stays with maintenance. But giving them the administrative and the contracting skills to know how to deal with management, as a chief of maintenance, we never trained people like that before.
- Ginny Rousseau: Joe Evans started a number of Management for Chief Ranger courses out of Rocky Mountain. And we did one up at, I believe, Harpers Ferry. Which was the same idea of giving rangers who their next logical move was to be a chief ranger, understanding of contracting issues. Understanding of human resource issues, etc. Things that you need to do to be a good chief ranger. We don't do that for superintendents, even. (laughs)
- Ginny Rousseau: But that's where I think the professionalization was good, but it's a double-edged sword. We lost a lot when we became so professionalized.

- Brenna Lissoway: That's really interesting. Anything else that you want to talk about in terms of your time at Albright?
- Ginny Rousseau: Just a real feeling of accomplishment, of helping people gain understanding and knowledge that would help them as they moved on in their career. I think that really solidified that that's something I was good at and I enjoyed. That carried through to what I'm doing today as adjunct professor at NAU park ranger training academy. So that really filled a niche, that, as Dennis said, if I hadn't done it, I would have always regretted it.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, what was your next move?
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, the plan originally had been for Dennis to apply and hopefully get a park ranger job at Grand Canyon. It made sense to us because housing was so short that we figured I'm in housing that belongs to Albright Training Center. If Grand Canyon hired him, he wouldn't be taking up a Grand Canyon house. So that in itself would be a help.
- Ginny Rousseau: He applied for, I think, three jobs. North Rim job and two others, I believe. And even though it was somewhat more obvious to us he was more qualified than a couple of people that got hired, he wasn't going to be considered.
- Ginny Rousseau: At that point, there was a real rift between Albright Training Center and the canyon. It's interesting. On one of the hikes we took while an instructor, we were camped. And a young boy fell off a ledge and injured himself. It was right at dusk. No way anybody was going to be able to get anybody to get in and get him. And I was there. I was an EMT. And there was a nurse in the campground.
- Ginny Rousseau: And she said, "I'll sit up with him all night," you know. He was with a youth group or something like that. "And we'll monitor him. And if in the morning I think he needs to be flown out; you can call." Well, he didn't. And they helped him hike out.
- Ginny Rousseau: The canyon was furious that we took this on and didn't call them to come take care of it. Well, Canyon was into statistics. And you get statistics, the more you respond.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, there were these kind of, the superintendent of Albright and the superintendent of the canyon didn't get along real well. There was not a good relationship there. The handwriting on the wall that Dennis was not going to get a job at the canyon. So, I needed to look, where can I get back closer to Cape Cod where he was?
- Ginny Rousseau: Bob Stanton came out and spoke to the class. And he was, at that point, the regional director for the whole North Atlantic, was it Herb Cables? It was Herb Cables.
- Dennis Burnett: Could have been Herb.



- Ginny Rousseau: I think it was Herb Cables was the director of the old North Atlantic region. And he came out and talked. And in our conversations afterwards, who are you, where are you from? I said, "Well I'm an instructor here. My husband and kids are back at Cape Cod." "What?!" Well, it's been two years, and this is just, Dennis has tried.
- Ginny Rousseau: And he thought that was atrocious. So, I got a phone call that I was encouraged to put in for the North Atlantic regional chief ranger job out of Boston. J.T. Reynolds, who I'd followed to Albright, had gone to that job and had left, moved on, and so it was vacant. So, I applied and got the job.
- Ginny Rousseau: It's interesting. A number of jobs in my career, I have not necessarily applied blind and competed and gotten the job. A number of them, I got a phone call and was asked to apply. In some ways, that bothered me because it was like, are they pre-selecting why? But on the other hand, they were jobs I felt I was capable of. A thing I've always been skeptical of is women who will accept jobs that are way above their competency level. And I didn't want to ever be in that position.
- Ginny Rousseau: Even though going to the Northeast region as regional chief of the North Atlantic region, was a stretch, what I did when I got there, the position had been vacant so long that it was really in a shambles. John Guthrie was the associate for operations. Dale Dickerhoof was the park police captain who was there. They did not have a resource management specialist at that point. I'm not sure they had a fire management officer at that time. Their safety officer had just left. Vern Hurt had gone to Omaha. So, it was kind of, kind of a wreck.
- Ginny Rousseau: First thing I did was say I want to go down to the Mid-Atlantic region, where Chris Andress was regional chief and had a dynamic, functional regional office, chief ranger's office. Then we played with names. Are you the chief of resource and visitor protection, or visitor and resource protection? And that has changed as politically our thrusts have changed. When I was there, I made it resource and visitor protection. And it's now been switched around to visitor, and even in Washington today, it's a whole other title.
- Ginny Rousseau: But I went down. Spent time with Chris. Saw Kathy Jope.
- Dennis Burnett: [Delanaro?]
- Ginny Rousseau: No. Resource manager who was in Seattle. Anyway, he had some dynamic chiefs. And so, it was like okay, now I know what I need to strive for.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, went back and started to build Division of Resource and Visitor Protection. Hired a fire management officer. Two of them at different points. Dan O'Brien, who went onto Rocky, or to that area. Exceptional. We started, we hired the first structural fire manager for the region, Joe Mazzeo. There was one in Boise, but not in a region. Because Northeast had so many facilities and buildings, we felt that was critical.

- Ginny Rousseau: I hired a resource management specialist. And also, an integrated pest management specialist. Again, because of the structures, we needed somebody that understood pests and could get in and make evaluations. Carol DeSalvo, phenomenal lady. She had pet cockroaches in a fishbowl on her desk. (laughs)
- Ginny Rousseau: So, I really felt I again had a chance to grow something that was of the caliber that, going back to Yosemite, that kind of operation. North Atlantic was real different, though. Marie Rust was regional director. And mostly I got called up to show her how to wear the uniform. “No, Marie, you can’t wear the boots with the skirt. I’m sorry, that’s not official. I can get the hat on over your beehive and get it straight.”
- Ginny Rousseau: But we did some fun things. We took an all-women’s SET Team, other than Dan O’Brien, who went as the IC, up to Women’s Rights for the opening of Women’s Rights. Which we felt was very appropriate, to have an all-women team. Even though Dan was our IC. We worked with the Seneca Falls Police on that, and it was very positive effort.
- Ginny Rousseau: Again, North Atlantic region was a little different. Gateway was kind of its own entity. But we tried where we could to make a difference.
- Brenna Lissoway: So how would you characterize the role of the regional office in the way the, in the operation of the park service? You know, you’ve been at parks all this time. Going to the region for the first time, what were some of the—
- Ginny Rousseau: It depends on the dynamics of the region. In North Atlantic, they really kept it pretty tight in that the associate almost dealt more with the superintendents than I did. I did deal with the chief rangers. Again, a lot of small, historic parks in the Northeast. Not a lot, I mean, you have Cape Cod, you have Acadia, so you have some bigger parks. But not the Yosemite and Great Smokies and things like that.
- Ginny Rousseau: We did develop good working relationships with the regional chiefs. Dan O’Brien made some real inroads, especially at Gateway, with fire management planning. And we started getting, this was one of the first attempts for rangers to apply for resource management project funding. NRPP. And were told, “Why are you doing that? That’s our money.” But we started kind of trying to get recognition or develop projects that would, for parks, that would, I think Dan was successful in getting a lot with the fire management.
- Ginny Rousseau: It was interesting enough while again, it was closer to home, going to Boston. But it was still a five-and-a-half hour commute, round trip, from the Cape. So, a number of times I would stay in town. John Piltzecker was an interpretive supervisor at Boston. And he had a third-floor walk-up on the north end. And he would let me sleep on his futon, which had a great view of the Old North Church steeple at night.

- Ginny Rousseau: So, I really enjoyed Boston. It's a fabulous city. The commute from the cape was pretty hectic. I did everything from the bus to carpools, you name it. So again, that was kind of hectic and a long time away.
- Ginny Rousseau: But there were some challenges there. Again, that's probably the place where I noticed the biggest difference between working in an urban environment versus, and it wasn't even urban versus rural. It's western versus eastern. And eastern United States versus—
- Ginny Rousseau: The highlight, probably, of my tenure as a regional chief, I was not the only woman, but I was one that knew a lot of the guys that were chiefs. We would have regional chief meetings nationwide. And Walt Dabney was in Washington and Jim Brady was in Washington. There were different people there, so they coordinated those. And we got together in Seattle or all over. And that was phenomenal. Phil Ward was there. I mean, there were some amazing people that were regional chiefs. And I was very comfortable with that group. So again, maybe I felt I'd kind of arrived. I wasn't intimidated by them.
- Ginny Rousseau: What was funny was when we shifted from North Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic to Northeast region. I had then gone to Shenandoah as a chief ranger. And the guys from the Northeast, when we got together for regional chief meetings, not national regional chiefs, but chiefs within the region. The guys from the Northeast said, "Ginny, we're really glad you're on there. You understand us. You're not like those alpha males." (laughs) Well, those alpha males, I was very comfortable. Doyal Nelson, Brian Fitzgerald, the Chief at Valley Forge, John Berns, Assateague Island. I mean, it was a great group, and I was very comfortable with it.
- Ginny Rousseau: I remember going to the Morton Salt not empire, estate, in Omaha. With the guys on a tour when we were there for a meeting. And this little old docent, "Honey, you're the only girl here. You okay?" And I was like, "Huh? Really?" It didn't dawn on me. It was a non-issue. And that's I'm not sure when that turned around that people, it was more personality-driven than it was you're female or male. It was who are you? What do you bring to the table?
- Brenna Lissoway: Do you think that was because there were more and more women in the park service?
- Ginny Rousseau: There weren't at that level. I don't know. There were still parks that women had a terribly hard time. And in fact, Yosemite made a turnaround. After I left, there were women who worked for me at Shenandoah National Park who every time they talked about it, they got choked up. Because they were treated so viciously and so mean-spirited.
- Brenna Lissoway: At Yosemite?
- Ginny Rousseau: At Yosemite. And I went, "Wait a minute. I was there. That should have broken some ice. What happened?" But again, it's leadership. It's who's in

- charge, what do they tolerate, what do they not, what are they going to put up with?
- Brenna Lissoway: That's interesting. One thing that you mentioned earlier that I want to just try and get you to talk a little bit more about is just this notion of the difference between western parks and eastern parks.
- Ginny Rousseau: I think there's, and I've seen it today, I mean, I can see it today. There's an attitude of people, okay, there are people who will only work in Rocky Mountain region. Many times, it's very difficult for someone from another region to get a job in Rocky Mountain region. They keep it internal. There's, not saying that's the only place, but there's an elitism. In wild land fire, when they develop the, not protocols, but the prescription for how do you give fire monies out of Boise, it's based on the western fire model. In the east, you have two fire seasons. You have a spring and fall. That's not taken into account. They judge it on a western fire model, which is summer, kind of early fall, you know, when you don't get the rains. There's a real snob attitude. Those eastern parks, they don't need fire money. Why do they need it?
- Ginny Rousseau: Cape Cod just had their fire program abolished. Again, because this kind of prescription that only sees things one way. And that way, "Well, you don't have the big trees. You don't have this or that" that maybe Acadia has, but Cape Cod has been doing some amazing project fires over the years.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, it's, a number of people will say, "I'll never work east of the Rockies." Now, I don't think I felt that way going in, but I saw it once we got there. I've seen the attitudinal thing. Again, North Atlantic chiefs versus the Mid-Atlantic. The alpha dogs versus the smaller park, Sagamore Hill, Minuteman. These tiny little parks, the people who are chiefs there, versus the Gettysburg and Delaware Water Gap and that. There's a real contrast. Great Smokies is probably, and Acadia, well, mainly Great Smokies is one of the largest and only wild park, you know, big park feel, in the east. Shenandoah was developed for that, and actually it's done pretty well of pulling people from other places because, but that was developed because we want a western type park in the east.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, there was this, the west is what it's all about. You've got the Y parks. Yosemite, Yellowstone. Tetons. Olympic. I mean, and these have this aura about them that the others are quite as up to snuff. I mean, they don't meet the standard of what a national park is, or a national area.
- Ginny Rousseau: We've hopped back and forth. And I can appreciate, at Smokies, I think it's still, I think it's a fabulous place. But there's just a huge, within the park service, cultural difference of western versus eastern.
- Brenna Lissoway: That's interesting. Do you want to talk at all about your brief stint as acting superintendent for Morristown?

- Ginny Rousseau: Sure. That was when the park service did away with all chief rangers. That decimated, boy, it hurt us as far as protection. We had no voice.
- Brenna Lissoway: What prompted that?
- Ginny Rousseau: It was a reorganization—
- Brenna Lissoway: We'll just pause for a minute. [pause] Okay, go ahead, Ginny.
- Ginny Rousseau: I got an opportunity to do an acting superintendent job at Morristown National Historic Park. And the reason, well, right before that, the National Park Service was changing their organizational structure and their line of communication and authority from Washington to a regional office to the field parks. They decided that they wanted to develop clusters of parks that had things in common so they could share resources and they could collaborate. They were basically doing away with regional offices. They were changing it from regional director to cluster leader or supervisor or whatever.
- Dennis Burnett: Cluster superintendent.
- Ginny Rousseau: Cluster superintendent. Again, that person had no line authority and there was no expertise coming from the Washington office. Because who did it go to? There was no line from a Washington regional chief to a regional chief to a park chief ranger. It just went out the window. It lasted about two years.
- Ginny Rousseau: But as this was kind of gaining momentum, I got an opportunity to go to Morristown as an acting superintendent. At that point, Dennis and the kids had moved from the Cape to Delaware Water Gap, which was five and a half hours south. And instead of five and a half hours a day, I was going on Thursday evening five and a half hours to Delaware Water Gap, staying until Sunday afternoon, and then driving five and a half hours back to Quincy, where I had an attic apartment with some friends. Caught the T, went to work. But again, this separation and juggling was real interesting.
- Ginny Rousseau: The opportunity at Morristown was again, small park, great community support. They liked the park. It wasn't like Smokies, where you'd get tacks in your drive because they didn't like the feds. But I went in and only did it for, I think, 90 days. Three months. Would love to have had that superintendency. But regional director had somebody else in mind. But again, this was an opportunity to work with the division chiefs, to help them get done what they needed to do, to just get out of their way if they were good, and kind of give some direction where it was needed. The superintendent that had been there had gone to Ellis Island as superintendent. So again, fabulous opportunity to work with people. Amazing little park, and I had a lot of respect for it.
- Ginny Rousseau: Commute was only an hour and a half. But in the winter, I'd throw a sleeping bag in the car. Because if we got an ice storm trying to go home to Delaware Water Gap didn't work. But that was the kind of thing that

would have worked. We could have made it, if I'd gotten the superintendency there.

Ginny Rousseau: When I didn't, that was when they were actively abolishing chief ranger jobs. So, there was nothing for me to go back to, really. And again, a phone call out of the blue was Bill Wade, asking me if I would consider coming to Shenandoah National Park. Not as the chief ranger, but as a central district leader. Bill was trying one of his new organizational experiments. And I know Bill well enough to know he tries things, he's great, and he moves on and he has fun doing what he's doing. A lot of respect for all the things he can come up with.

Ginny Rousseau: I really was interested in that, and so we gave it a lot of thought. I think at that point, Dennis had already moved to Washington. No, he had not. I was, so I took this job at Shenandoah. A six-and-a-half-hour drive from Delaware Water Gap. Couldn't do it every week. I was getting sciatica, or driving off the road, almost, sometimes, in the middle of the night for lack of sleep.

Ginny Rousseau: And so, took the job as Central District Leader. I said, "Bill, what does that mean? Give me a job description here." He said, "Well, it's like you have your own little park. You'll have your administrative people. You'll oversee a maintenance guy, resources person, protection, and interp." So, it was like a little mini park.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, he set up three of those at Shenandoah. He hired a maintenance fellow. And again, like when I was an intake ranger, you got the money that came with the position because they needed to get rid of me in the region. So, he got my money, plus me. He got Kevin McMurray's money, who had been a chief of maintenance in the North Atlantic Region. He got him as a North District Leader. And he had a PIO there, Sandy Reeves, who he put in as the south. But he got two free positions and money. Again, incentive to take people out of the regional offices, which they were trying to clear them out.

Ginny Rousseau: I was fortunate. Central district was a gift. I had phenomenal maintenance, protection, interp people, and resources. We had fun. We had; our division meetings were just great. An example is Rolf Gubler was my resource manager and specialist. Chester Micus was my chief of maintenance. Clay Jordan, well, Bob Martin was the protection person, and then Clay moved into it. And I had three investigators within our realm to work with in protection. Had my own secretary, my own budget clerk. And Paul Pfenninger, who's at Rocky Mountain that we saw, he was my chief of interp. We had fun. We had great meeting and did a lot of good work together.

Ginny Rousseau: I remember Rolf saying in a meeting that he had some hazard trees down in one of the campgrounds, and he was really worried because he didn't know how he was—and everybody looked at him and said, "Rolf, we can all take care of it. We can work together."

- Ginny Rousseau: So, for us, it worked. For the South District and the North District, they had some personality issues and different strengths and weaknesses that it wasn't as successful. But boy, did we rock and roll. We had a picture every year of all of our team. We had cookouts that the maintenance guys brought their big grills up and grilled. Don't ever give maintenance guys green Jell-O, because they don't eat it. They don't like to eat green stuff.
- Ginny Rousseau: Again, Central District at Shenandoah is one of the busiest district, because it's got Big Meadows campground, one of the largest campgrounds. It's got Skyland Lodge and Big Meadows Lodges, so it's got the concessions operations. We had a lot going on. So that was fun.
- Brenna Lissoway: So, I see that your position changed, but you stayed at Shenandoah. (Ginny Rousseau laughs) So can you talk a little bit about what happened?
- Ginny Rousseau: When Bill Wade left, everybody that was interesting, the people at headquarters felt that they were kind of shut out. They had no line authority. Much like that cluster parks where we were running our own things. We didn't need a chief of interp down at headquarters telling us what to do or how to do it.
- Ginny Rousseau: The problem was Shenandoah did look like three different parks. They mowed at different times. So, people driving from one end of the park to the other would go, gee, it looks different. What's different here? The signs are different, or this is different. So, pluses and minuses of that kind of thing. But, much like the Washington office during the cluster two years, there was no expertise to draw on. Because they had no line authority. You could ask them if you wanted to, but you didn't have to. That was real frustrating for some very type A personalities down there who wanted to be in charge.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, Bill Wade left, as he does. He sets it up and he leaves. And everybody goes, wait a minute, why aren't you here tweaking this? That's not his style.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, Doug Morris came in as superintendent. Well, Doug lasted probably two, three months, maybe, with that organization, and said, we're done. We're going back to a typical park operation.
- Ginny Rousseau: It was okay. I had been a Regional Chief Ranger. I had a protection background. It made sense for me to become the Park Chief Ranger. Larry Hakel, who had been there, retired. So that position was vacant. I could move into it. The fellow who was the north district, Kevin McMurray, had been a regional chief of maintenance. So again, he slid very nicely into the park chief of maintenance. And Sandy Reeves, who'd been the south, became the, I'm not sure he was assistant superintendent, or a PIO. And outstanding. Dealt with a lot of the lands issues and things.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, all of a sudden, we have these three very separate areas and we're supposed to bring them together. Greg Stiles, who'd been a staff person to the chief down at headquarters who retired, became my assistant chief or

deputy chief. Greg is a guru in ICS and logistics and planning and again, a phenomenal plans chief. So, we had a disparity between fee collection, communication center, rangers, you name it.

Ginny Rousseau: It was like okay; how do we get these people on the same page? Well, in the Brady/Smith/Wade style, I decided we needed a goal setting and we needed to develop a mission statement and goals for the park, for protection. And so, I hired Lucia Bragan to come in from Washington to facilitate. And she led us in a mission and vision exercise with all the supervisors in protection, the leads from fire, the leads from fee, the communication center, and then also a certain number of field people. Fee collector, a com center person, a ranger who wasn't a supervisor.

Ginny Rousseau: I remember sitting in that, we went to Beckley, West Virginia, and had rented the conference center there. We stayed in little cabins. And I remember sitting in that meeting going holy shit, I just gave up any control I had. Because they're the ones that are going to develop the vision and mission statement for the division. I have stepped back. This is scary.

Ginny Rousseau: That was – but it was great! Those folks came up with far better vision/mission statements than I ever could on my own. So, it was a real affirmation of involving people and letting them take ownership.

Ginny Rousseau: And it brought us together. Basically, because they then had a commonality. And they'd eaten together and joked together. And it really broke down the barriers.

Brenna Lissoway: So, what are some of the things that, it sounds like that's a thing that you're very proud of at Shenandoah. What are some of the other accomplishments that you felt you were able to achieve there?

Ginny Rousseau: Probably the biggest accomplishment, or one of them, well there were several small. We got our fire management officer up to a GS12, I think. Again, this east and west. When we sent fire crews out on western fires, they usually were relegated to doing mop-up, because they were from the east. So again, this bias or this prejudice, east/west prejudice. We were able to get fee collection, fee management, professionalized. And Linda Green, who was my fee manager for years, became a national fee trainer or coordinator. And people who have gone from Shenandoah have set up exemplary programs at Zion, at, where was the other one? Zion and Sequoia. So, we were able to, again, be a feeder program for professionalizing fee management. Fire, again, we had obstacles because of this bias.

Ginny Rousseau: But one of the biggest accomplishments, I think, was in resource protection. We had a resource manager come down to the office one day. And he looks at us and he says, "What do you all do?" And we got him coffee, and said, "What do you mean, what do we do? We patrol. We range." We do, you know, the old thing. Rangers are rangers. He said, "What do you *do*? Show me what you do."



- Ginny Rousseau: Well, as Ken Johnson likes to say, we sat back and licked our wounds a little bit and kind of got over our immediate huff. And we looked at each other and said, “What *do* we do? What do we do that’s measurable and definable?” Protection always has a terrible time of getting funding because we can’t articulate it, what it is we do and why we do it. We’re supposed to, you know, respond on instant notice to anything. But what do we actually accomplish? Resource management can give you all kinds of things, and projects for this and that and whatever, and compete for funding. Fire can do the same thing through the national. Interp can say, “I want to do an interpretive prospectus.” What can rangers do?
- Ginny Rousseau: This really gave us some thought. And the biggest thing I did was get out of the way so some real thinkers could put their heads together.
- Ginny Rousseau: We started coming up with plans, which said during the fall, we split it into seasons. Fall, winter, summer. We will focus on different priorities. We will set priorities for the division, and we will focus on those. And if somebody wants us to do something that’s not in this plan, they’re going to have to really have a good reason.
- Ginny Rousseau: The example was, we had a resource manager call us and say, “Oh my god, you’ve got to get over to the southwest end of the park because there’s people coming in from the boundary, and the building fire rings are all over the place.” And one of my folks said, “What does the resource management plan say about the stability of that area?” Well, it’s fine, it’s doing well.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, you know what? If it’s doing fine and it’s not at risk, we can’t drive the two hours down there to go chase off illegal campers, you know. So, we started, we wanted rangers held accountable that in the springtime they’re going to focus on boundary patrols. They’re going to touch base again with those neighbors. And say, “Hey, how’s it going? Did you have a good winter? Have you seen anybody going into the park?” That they could start developing those relationships.
- Ginny Rousseau: We developed area rangers, where rangers were specific, had specific responsibility for a specific area of the park. And that was theirs. If I had a rescue in that area, that was the person I went to because they know the area. They know the neighbors, they know the area, they know where do people do things.
- Ginny Rousseau: In the winter they said, you guys do all this effort to have deer poaching patrols. You do massive park wide task forces. They said, why? We have way too many deer, and they’re not threatened. It was like, oh, shit. Now what do we do?
- Ginny Rousseau: So, it really became obvious to us that we were making decisions that were not science driven. And there needed to be a better connection between science and enforcement actions. And by the way, we need to get some money. So how do we get some money?

- Ginny Rousseau: We sent in an investigator, a criminal investigator, to a grant writing class. And here's an 1811 in a grant writing class with all these resource folks. They're going, "What are you doing here? Why are you here?" Well, poor Ken Johnson.
- Ginny Rousseau: It took him about a year to learn the whole dynamics. How do you speak science? How do you speak resources? Well, guess what? He couldn't speak ranger after he came back. It was like, what did he say?
- Ginny Rousseau: Who was the, there was a fellow at Fort Collins. Peter Dratch.
- Dennis Burnett: The T & E guy.
- Ginny Rousseau: T&E guy—
- Brenna Lissoway: The threatened and endangered species.
- Ginny Rousseau: Yeah. Threatened and endangered species guru out of Fort Collins. I can't think of Peter's last name, but I will. He took Ken under his wing. And they would lock themselves in a room until Ken could get it right.
- Ginny Rousseau: And so, what we did – well, let me back up just a little. Another thing that we got out of the way of was we had a three-year sting operation with Virginia Game and Fish and rangers. On illegal poaching of bear galls in the park. We knew there was an incredible market for that. And so, they basically did a three-year sting operation where we, I can't remember how many indictments we had out of it. But we turned a lot of people.
- Ginny Rousseau: One of the people, a couple who lived on the Sperryville side of the park, east side of the Shenandoah, had been buyers and sellers. They were the middle person for these bear galls to people who wanted them. Bear galls are in great demand in the Asian communities and overseas because if you grind them up, they're an aphrodisiac. And wild bear are much more in demand than farm-raised bear. Japan and China have some appalling YouTube videos on farm-raised bear where they have them in these teeny little cages and they draw the bile out of their gall bladders for sale while they're still alive. I mean, it's just a constant harvesting of bear gall.
- Ginny Rousseau: Anyway, we knew there was a market. So, what happened is, we turned this couple who in a plea agreement were not given jail time if they would cooperate and help turn other people who were involved. Regional office special agent, Asian background. Jeff Pascal came down and did undercover buys for us. Clark Guy, who was the regional LE specialist, helped with the funding and things like this.
- Ginny Rousseau: That was the first step that propelled us into another three-year covert operation that even the rangers in the park didn't know about.
- Brenna Lissoway: And what was that?
- Ginny Rousseau: Operation Soup. Special operation to uncover poachers.
- Dennis Burnett: That was the bear one.

- Ginny Rousseau: No, that was – that was? Okay. SOUP was the first one. Viper was the second. And what it was, I had some real thinkers at this point. I had two investigators – Skip Wissinger, Ken Johnson and Clay Jordan, who was a district ranger at that point. Probably some of the best thinkers that I've ever seen in the park service. Clay's now the acting superintendent at Great Smokies. He's the chief ranger there normally. But these guys were amazing. And what I could do was get out of their way and facilitate the plans they came up with.
- Ginny Rousseau: What they came up with was with the Virginia Game and Fish, and support from region and Washington, was a covert operation of buying a storefront, or renting a storefront, in [McGackeysville?], no it wasn't—
- Dennis Burnett: Elkton.
- Ginny Rousseau: Elkton. Which is right on the western boundary of the park, about halfway down, off route 33. To rent a storefront, set up an operation to buy and sell ginseng, predominantly. And then to tape it, to track it, to find out who coveted this resource.
- Ginny Rousseau: Parallel with this, Ken Johnson, my thinker, who ended up as a thinker, basically, because we had a homicide in the park. We had two women killed right off the Appalachian Trail near Skyland. It was a hate crime. Their throats were cut, and they were taped with duct tape. And during this investigation, we decided we needed to hire an intelligence analyst. Dispatch/the Communications Center was not happy with me. I pulled a dispatch position, and I hired an army intelligence agent who had done criminal intelligence analysis.
- Ginny Rousseau: We brought her in to work with the investigators. The homicide investigation, it went on for two to three years. Huge, long-term thing that the fellow who was responsible was eventually caught trying to abduct another woman and was sentenced for her. So, we never got a conviction on the two women that were killed, because the evidence got caught up in an FBI scandal of mishandling of evidence. So, we basically lost it. Because our DNA and everything – moral of the story: bring the state labs in to do your crime scene processing, rather than the feds.
- Ginny Rousseau: But anyway, so here we were running this, we had an intelligence analyst now working with the investigators up at Big Meadows. Taking all the data that was incoming – phone calls these people made, who these people were – and analyzing and seeing patterns and connections.
- Ginny Rousseau: Basically, after three years, the other piece of that was Ken Johnson, with his grant writing, wrote a proposal and got us a three-year grant money out of national resource protection money for resources, for this project. To identify and mark ginseng in the park. So, we had resources hire some biotechs and go out and mark ginseng.
- Ginny Rousseau: But what was the ginseng that was the easiest, that was the most accessible? What were the roots that people came in to try to gather this?

So again, more analysis. Science-driven. Making our actions science based.

Ginny Rousseau: So, we get this grant to mark the ginseng, to identify it, to do literary studies. I mean, we did the whole nine yards. Skip is working on the covert piece and Joan is our analyst. And the district rangers don't even know this is going on. It is so sensitive, because Virginia Game and Fish provided the covert operator to work at the store. And if it had gotten out, he would have been targeted.

Ginny Rousseau: Bottom line after three years with Joan doing all this analysis, and I'm following up on leads, I think it was a hundred and some indictments, which we had never had that kind of – now, that was a mix of state and federal. But what it showed was the magnitude of big organized poaching operations, whether it's mosses, whether it's ginseng, whether it's bear galls, whether it's archeological. There are, out in the world here, there are people who covet those resources. And you're not going to get them randomly on patrol. You have to go after it in a very systematic and analytical way. But you have to know what are threatened. And then you can get help from resources.

Ginny Rousseau: And the problem was, resource didn't know much about ginseng, because there was never any national money to study ginseng. Resource managers study what Washington says, "Here, there's money for." Not what is a park priority.

Brenna Lissoway: Right.

Ginny Rousseau: So, kind of, we're playing God there. As Jack Morehead said, we're managing for preferred species. And we still are in resources. Because you only have scientists studying what there's funding for.

Ginny Rousseau: We were lucky enough because again, I had the thinkers that came up with this. And in essence, they developed a whole way of thinking of, if you're a ranger on patrol and you go to a park, how do you determine where you should spend your time? Now, if you're a seasonal, it may be driven by seasonal visitation. But then where should I spend my time? Where are the places that you have the most motor vehicle accidents at certain times of day? Do you walk through the campground to preventatively try and make sure you don't have a problem with food storage or noise? To tell a group early, "Oh, by the way, we have a ten o'clock quiet hour." But we wanted rangers to proactively think about where is it, I spend my time, and I'm an expensive asset. So where is it that I can be the most effective?

Ginny Rousseau: Rangers don't like you to tell them that. They want to just go range and do what they like. But we're saying no, you need to be managed. So we're putting our assets, and we're making the most of where we can be the most effective.

Brenna Lissoway: Mm hmm. That's really interesting.

- Ginny Rousseau: That, in fact, is what I teach at NAU. Ken Johnson started teaching it ten years ago. He did it for eight years. We moved to Flagstaff. I've taken it over. So this whole prioritization of resource threats, how do you know what they are? You go to interp programs, you go see resources, you talk to maintenance. It's a multi-disciplined approach. And what's the best asset to take care of it? It may be a maintenance guy cutting down a hazard tree. So it's a very multidisciplined approach. Not a very, not a real singularly divisional approach.
- Ginny Rousseau: And I've had superintendents come up to me and say, "I need you to tell me how many more park rangers do I need in my park?"
- Ginny Rousseau: And I say, "Well, tell me what your resources at risk, tell me what your threats are. And then let's determine. Do you need another fee collector? Do you need an analyst versus a law dog? You may not need a gun and a car. You may need something else to help mitigate that." So, it's saying what asset do I need to get the job done? And I need to prioritize my risks based on the legislation of the park, what takes priority, and based on the threats and who covets those resources.
- Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Very interesting.
- Ginny Rousseau: So that was what I had fun doing at Shenandoah. (laughter) That was amazing. It was a gift. I had missed that type of experience. I had gone from a sub district ranger to Albright Training Center as an instructor, which is not a supervisory job. To a regional chief. I missed a district ranger type experience, and a chief ranger. To get to go to Shenandoah, be a district leader and then move into a chief ranger job, that was phenomenal. That was ten years well spent.
- Brenna Lissoway: (laughs) So I see that you have on your resume that you were a project coordinator when you left Shenandoah? Did you retire at that point? You were still working for the park service?
- Ginny Rousseau: No! I was forced out. (laughs)
- Brenna Lissoway: Okay. Talk about that.
- Ginny Rousseau: At Shenandoah, again, it was a gift. We were having fun. We were doing so much in fees and protection. It was fabulous. But the clock was ticking, and I was going to turn 57. And according to Washington policy, we want a young and vigorous workforce. And you cannot carry a gun or be in a commissioned position, a covered position, I should say, 6C covered position after the age 57.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, I ignored it completely. Because I was so busy doing my job at Shenandoah. I didn't even look at applying for anything else. Dennis and I knew we didn't want to commute long-distance again. The kids were in high school. It was kind of a volatile time for them. You know, the hormones are going and everything. When they were little, we could do it, but this probably wasn't the best time.

- Ginny Rousseau: So again, I was out to dinner with a number of people from Washington region. And Sue Hawkins and Dick Powell took me aside, and said, “Ginny, we’d like you to consider being a term project facilitator for us for a new project that’s getting off the ground for the park service, which is to develop an incident reporting system.” I went, okay, what’s that mean? Well, we want people to be able to share information on incidents, on people.
- Ginny Rousseau: Bingo! This is just what I’ve been pushing. When we were in Yosemite, we would have car clouters or people that break into cars. That’s a technical term. Scientific term. They would start at Crater Lake and they would work their way down the California coast. They would hit Crater Lake, maybe Lassen. They would hit Yosemite, Sequoia, and head south. The only way you could even find out what was going on was to pick up the phone and call somebody and say, “Somebody just hit us. They’re probably heading your direction.” And then you’d kind of—
- Ginny Rousseau: So, this piqued my interest. Okay, I’m all about sharing information. I’m all about analyzing information, protection. This sounds kind of interesting. If I’ve got to get out of protection and law enforcement, this might be something that I’m not going to grumble about too much. So, I accepted a three-year term position as a project facilitator.
- Ginny Rousseau: Now, interesting enough. When I got sent to COTR training, contractors representative training for – they said, “Oh, yes. Your team of 30 people.”
- Ginny Rousseau: I went, wait a minute. We had three. Sue Hawkins out of Denver, an IT supervisor, manager for the region. Worked for Dom Nessi, who was in Washington at that time as the information management associate. I think that’s what he was. Had an IT guy, Lance Gridley, who was really an IT guy. I mean, this guy didn’t like a lot of people. He didn’t speak in public. He liked doing programming and working on IT projects. And Lorna Gunning Brown, who was in contracting.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, we had me, the somewhat subject matter expert for protection. We had Lance, who was the IT person, and we had Lorna, who kept us in line on contracting. We became the three-legged stool. We supported each other. So, for three years, we learned how to develop. We put together a team. And it was from all the bureaus within Department of Interior.
- Ginny Rousseau: I remember the first meeting we had, I went in uniform. Because all the other law dogs and IT folks were there. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Fish & Wildlife (FWL) and National Park Service (NPS).
- Dennis Burnett: Fish.
- Ginny Rousseau: Fish and Wildlife, all were there. And they were like this. They were just, their arms crossed. Their legs crossed. They weren’t giving an inch. “What is this you’re going to impose on us?”

- Ginny Rousseau: Well, BLM was really pissed, because they had their own system. It worked for them. They didn't want to play with anybody else. BIA didn't really have anything. BOR didn't think they needed anything. So how could I get this, my job as the facilitator was to get these guys to play together? To hold hands and jump together. Now it was not just getting the bureaus to. It was getting the IT guys and the law dogs to trust each other within their own bureau.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, we had, and the park service had a team of five. We were the largest one. Usually, it was just two people. But it was Dennis Burnett, Dale Dickerhoof, park police. Kathy Clark, from Denver. Alan Sparks, IT, and Dave Mulholland, park police.
- Dennis Burnett: [unclear] the IT guy.
- Ginny Rousseau: That's all right. Anyway, an IT guy—
- Dennis Burnett: Dave something.
- Ginny Rousseau: Yeah. So, park service was well represented. The problem is, park service has more things they play with than anybody else. We have search and rescue, we have traffic accidents. We have EMS. Most other bureaus only deal with the law enforcement part. They delegate to the county to do the other things that they need. So, we're starting easy. Okay, how are we going to get the law enforcement piece for everybody to be able to do it? We had to come up with the requirements. So that means, how can you define it? How can you articulate it? Exactly what you want this contract to read.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, Lorna, Lance and I stayed about an hour ahead, or five minutes ahead of the rest of the group. We'd go out in the hall. "Okay, what are we going to do now?" Then we'd go back in.
- Ginny Rousseau: And Lance, who was very hesitant to speak, Lorna, fabulous in contracting. So, I'm there, trying to facilitate and get everybody to play together.
- Ginny Rousseau: First meeting we had was over at interior. We had been at an IT conference. It had the floor to ceiling banners for each bureau on display. I said, "Can I borrow those?"
- Ginny Rousseau: So, in this room with all these guys, I had banners for every single bureau, coming, hanging down from the wall. Kind of [walked into it all?] Okay. I told them, "This is the one and only time you'll see me in a park service uniform. Because I don't have a dog in this fight. I'm here to get you all guys to, let's all work together."
- Ginny Rousseau: Fabulous assignment. I learned more. I had more fun. We actually cancelled at least two contracts that were right on the verge of being issued because we figured out the company couldn't do what they said. What we were asking was originally for an off-the-shelf product – not one

they would build – that would do all this analyzing, sharing information. Nobody could do it. So that was our mistake.

Ginny Rousseau: IBM came into us and said to us, “This isn’t possible to do. But we can build it for you.” But we couldn’t hire them, because that wasn’t the statement in the requirements. It said “an off-the-shelf product.”

Ginny Rousseau: Finally, after three years, four years, we finally got to where there was a small Canadian company who, when Lance and I and another fellow, Alan Sparks, went to an IT convention, exploring Cisco and everybody, I mean, you name it. We saw this small company and they said, “Let us do a demo” in the cafeteria or whatever. And they did this demo and we said, “This is what we want.”

Ginny Rousseau: They built it for the Canadian Mounties. They have isolated areas from [Guando?]. They’ve done this kind of thing on a smaller scale. Well at that point, unfortunately, it wasn’t American made, so to speak. They were Canadian.

Ginny Rousseau: Since then, after we went through several renditions, and even after I left the project, they established a home office in the U.S. and they were able to get them. That’s who now – I got to help name the project.

Brenna Lissoway: Which is?

Ginny Rousseau: The IMAR system. Parks right now since last January—

Dennis Burnett: January ‘13

Ginny Rousseau: January of 2013 have got to go to using that system for all their reporting. So, we got there. Boy, there’s a lot of people that hate it. Because if they don’t work with it enough, it’s hard to figure out. If your park infrastructure is not what it should be, your T1 lines, all that is not what it is, it’s not going to work right. So again, a lot of factors. The name of it, IMARS, is Incident Management and Analysis Reporting System. I put the “A” in. I want a system that can analyze information. Again, going back to Shenandoah, going back to how do we develop cases, how do we solve intricate problems?

Ginny Rousseau: So again, it’s kind of fun. Because something that, you know, the three of us kind of just worked our butts off for three years. Lorna finally left because she says she went to the deputy contracting officer for the park service. Lance said, “I’ve had it!” And my three-year term was going to be up.

Ginny Rousseau: The greater motivation was that Dennis had to retire out of the Washington office. And he wasn’t going to drive me to the Metro station anymore from northern Virginia, which was a two-and-a-half-hour drive in. It was drive to Vienna, catch the Metro, go in and come back. And I can’t do that by myself. So not knowing if they were going to keep the, or re-institute another term position. The project had moved on. We had this group again, conference calls. It was on its way. But again, if I could do



nothing else, as the end of my career, without carrying a gun, being a law dog, being a general ranger, as I consider myself, that was probably one of really, really valuable accomplishments.

Brenna Lissoway: A great way to—

Ginny Rousseau: To end it. Yeah. I didn't go out mad, like I did from Shenandoah. (laughs)

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. That must have been really hard.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, I was late for my retirement party, or my leaving party, because I drove from one end of the park all the way to the other taking donuts to every fee collection booth and campground, and stopping and talking to people at overlooks. And just, again, like Yosemite. Didn't want to quite give it up.

Brenna Lissoway: Ginny, I just want to sort of start to wrap up the interview a little and ask you well first, before I begin to ask just a couple of more reflective larger questions, let me ask you about the role of the Association of National Park Rangers in your career, or how you've been involved with the group over the years.

Ginny Rousseau: The Association of National Park Rangers was started originally as a social get together from that initial Yosemite group who had transferred from Yosemite. They'd been there, they'd worked hard, they'd played hard. They'd made a difference. And then they started going to different parks. They had a real camaraderie. They said we want to get together, let's get together. They picked Jackson Hole, Wyoming, for the first get together. Just a get together. What's everybody doing? Who's doing what? Let's see what anybody's doing.

Ginny Rousseau: I did not go to the first one. I was intimidated a little bit because it was the guys. And would I be welcome? Could I go? Was I, was I worthy to go?

Ginny Rousseau: It evolved. They started, just like they did things, they did something when they were in Yosemite, they did something with that. They started the organization. They developed the networking. They expanded it and it became the organization it is today. Well, the organization it started at, it's even evolved further.

Ginny Rousseau: Actually, we were commenting at the rendezvous this time, is there was very little protection focus in the workshops, in the things. And I'm going, wait a minute, where is it? It's broader. It's evolved. It's more inclusive, which I think is really good, of all employees of the National Park Service. But it was started by the group of rangers that were in Yosemite together. Bill Hallinan, an integral part. Was the first editor for the *Ranger* magazine, for years. Those guys are thinkers. They're the kind of people that do something.

Ginny Rousseau: Walt Dabney went on to manage the Texas state parks after he retired. So, a lot of, they've all, they've actually been very much involved in the International Association of Park Rangers, which expanded even further

than just U.S. national parks to international. And there's an international meetings once every four years. Which have been in Africa, they've been all over the world.

Brenna Lissoway: Have you participated in any international—

Ginny Rousseau: No, I haven't. At this point, I haven't. Would love to. But life didn't quite take us there at that point.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah.

Ginny Rousseau: Just gotten back into the Association of National Park, we went to the Bend Rendezvous. This was our next one. There were a number of years we missed, because of juggling careers and kids and all that.

Ginny Rousseau: One thing I wanted to say, just one more thing about Shenandoah.

Brenna Lissoway: Yes.

Ginny Rousseau: Bill Wade's central district leader. An opportunity I had was I had to go down to Madison County, which hates the park, because we took their land. And they want to know when we're going to put a road from Madison up to Big Meadows. And so, every month or so I would have to go down and deal with or address or communicate with the Board of Supervisors. And those were real interesting.

Ginny Rousseau: We had a major mudslide that took out a whole portion of the mountain. And part of an old road. And rocks ended up, actually, in the farmers' fields. It was a huge flood through Wolfstown and all that area. Much like those Colorado floods that just wiped out a lot. Nobody was killed in it, but it was very similar. Fortunately, it was a less populated area.

Ginny Rousseau: But I remember some of the old guys saying to me, "Well, when are you going to get those rocks out of my field? They came off your mountain." (laughs) But again, another opportunity to do something to broaden my expertise.

Brenna Lissoway: So how did you approach a combative community? I mean, what was your strategy to try and you know—

Ginny Rousseau: To not get upset. To just say what is it we can do? What can we do? What can't we do? To take the abuse occasionally because they just wanted to vent. And they're really pissed that the park took their land. Even though it went from the state of Virginia, the state of Virginia took their land, and then the land went to the National Park Service. But they don't see it that way. Strong ties to the land and to their ancestors. Can't blame them on that. But you know, you just try and work with it. And what can we do? And can we go down and have a booth on their fall festival, maybe?

Ginny Rousseau: One of the things, and I'll say this, the chief of interp, when we got to a traditional organization did do, they redid the interpretive prospectus in the Visitors' Center up at Big Meadows. And there's a huge section on the Appalachian families and home, people that lived within the park. It tells

their story. Very compelling. Very well done. So I think that's the kind of thing that helps bridge that. But we'll never, you know, never get there totally.

Ginny Rousseau: It's kind of like Smokies. Again, the same kind of thing. "You took our land." There they take, used to take groups into the family cemeteries. And they would transport them there—

Brenna Lissoway: The park would?

Ginny Rousseau: Escort them. The park would. Because they have the right to visit those cemeteries.

Ginny Rousseau: But anyway, that was just another thing [unclear]

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah, but that's interesting. And I think that's one of the big challenges for a lot of park service employees is just learning to deal with communities that may not be the most receptive to the park being there.

Ginny Rousseau: Well, and especially turnover. A ranger will go stay three or four years at a park and then move. They think well why should I bother getting to know you? You're not going to be here that long. But that was one of the things that pushed us to really push that boundary patrol neighborhood kind of interaction between our field rangers and the, who lived outside the park. Not just to gather intel. But to get to know the neighbors, to build that trust, so when something does happen, they don't mind picking up the phone.

Brenna Lissoway: Right. Right. So I want to ask you, has there ever been a time in your career where you've been asked to do something that you do not agree with?

Ginny Rousseau: Probably there was. In the old North Atlantic region, the associate I worked for, I felt, did not have a lot of ethics. And so I had to really kind of figure out how could I do what I thought was right, or I knew was right, and not cross that line that I had set for myself? It's not just something for myself. But one thing we try to get across to the kids at NAU Park Ranger Training Academy is that as a protection ranger, as a law enforcement officer, you have to hold yourself to a higher standard. On and off duty. It means don't speed. Don't have a couple of drinks and then drive. I still hold doors for people like I'm in uniform. I mean, they look at you like, what do you mean you're holding the door? "Hi. How are you today?" You always say, "Hi, how are you?" (laughs) You know, to anybody walking down the street. Because that's part of that service-oriented culture that I've grown up in as a park ranger. But I think it's very, very important that if you see something or somebody wants you to do something and it isn't right, you have to just say no.

Ginny Rousseau: The question was have I ever had to do, or had somebody do something I felt was wrong or unethical. One time as chief ranger at Shenandoah, I got a call from a park ranger, Kim Mayo, who was a North District employee, saying that she had confronted a fellow in the campground in the North

District who was either camped illegally or had his electric cord plugged into—

Dennis Burnett: Plugged into the restroom.

Ginny Rousseau: Had his cord from his motor home plugged into the restroom outlet. Which you're not supposed to do. She asked him to unplug it. He became very belligerent at her, very antagonistic, and said, "No. Do you know who I am?" And she said, "No, sir. I don't know who you are." "Well, I'm with OMB and I—"

Brenna Lissoway: The Office of Management and—

Ginny Rousseau: of Management and Budget, "and I oversee the budget for the National Park Service."

Ginny Rousseau: Well, middle of the night call. And I think we talked about this as chief of Shenandoah, and Dennis is the chief in Washington, Shenandoah dispatched all the calls. If it was for him, a national emergency, I'd hand him the phone. If it was for me, I answered it.

Ginny Rousseau: Kim calls and says, "What do I do about this? This guy is just arrogant and obnoxious and really offensive." And Dennis, fortunately, was there beside me. And I said, "Well, hold on."

Ginny Rousseau: It may not have been the middle of the night, because I remember calling Doug Morris the superintendent. And I said, "Doug, this is the situation." And he says, "You know what? I don't think it's worth the ticket."

Ginny Rousseau: I called Kim back and I said, "Kim, just walk away from it." You hate to tell a ranger don't do something that you feel you need to. But the feeling from Dennis and Doug Morris both was, this isn't worth it to have somebody take such offense that they're going to penalize the park service's budget.

Ginny Rousseau: One other time, okay, I did think of something. (laughs) In my tenure at Shenandoah, we had a Camp Hoover historic area within Central District, which is now called Camp Rapidan, which was the original name, which was where Herbert Hoover would come to get away. It was his Camp David. They have the structures there. Over the years, that set of buildings evolved and they put on a kitchen. They, it became a pleasuring ground for congressional people from Washington. So they would call up and reserve could they stay at Camp Hoover.

Ginny Rousseau: As the park again began to become a little bit more aware that this was probably not the appropriate use, actually, there was a regional director who kyboshed those kinds of things because they said that was favoritism. If we can't offer it to the public, we shouldn't be making it available to our own.

Ginny Rousseau: And so, we started slowly trying to get out of the renting out Camp Hoover business.

- Ginny Rousseau: Well, one time, Bruce Babbitt, secretary of the interior, was coming up and wanted to stay at Camp Hoover. Harkin, first name. Was it Paul Harkin? No. Senator from—
- Dennis Burnett: Iowa.
- Brenna Lissoway: Tom Harkin? Tom Harkin?
- Dennis Burnett: Tom Harkin from Iowa.
- Ginny Rousseau: Tom Harkin. From Iowa. Was with him. So, they decided they were, you know, secretary says, “I’d like to stay at Camp Hoover.” We said, okay, we figured this out. We’re not going to let them stay in the Hoover building, but we’ve got a couple of others that they can stay in.
- Ginny Rousseau: Well, I get down there to welcome them, to let them in, and I said, “Here’s where you’re going to be staying.” We’re on the back porch of the Hoover main cabin. And I see Tom Harkin and Bruce Babbitt over talking. And Bruce comes over to me. He says, “Well, can I stay at the Hoover cabin?”
- Ginny Rousseau: It’s like, okay. This is the director of the secretary of the interior saying to me, “I want to stay—
- Dennis Burnett: Secretary of the interior.
- Ginny Rousseau: Or secretary of the interior. I’m sorry. Asking me, telling me he’d like to stay in Camp Hoover. We’ve done this. It’s not that it never has been done. Tom Harkin’s just standing there grinning like a Cheshire cat. Because he and his daughter had come down before and stayed there. And were on a pure boondoggle.
- Ginny Rousseau: So, maintenance guy was with me, and he’s like hiding in the back. He doesn’t want to have any part of this. And I looked at Bruce Babbitt, and I looked at him and said, “Do you want a double bed or twin?” I figured if I can’t trust the secretary of the interior to take care of this resource, then who can? So, I went in and I made the bed. (laughs)
- Ginny Rousseau: The maintenance guy goes, “God, I’m glad you were there.” But Tom Harkin had to stay in a different building.
- Ginny Rousseau: But again, you know, are you going to win the battle and lose the war? I knew Tom had put him up to it. I know Bruce probably would have, if we could have talked before, would have been fine staying somewhere else. But, you know, do you want a single or a twin bed? (laughs) Again, it wasn’t something immoral. But it was just a judgment thing. So you just say, what’s the right thing to do? Don’t get caught on, you know, it’s not my job or I’ve got to do this or the rules are this. We deal with so much gray area. And we need to sort through it and say what’s the right thing to do. And then not be afraid to do it.
- Brenna Lissoway: Well, this kind of brings me to my last question. And that is, can you talk a little about what leadership has meant to you in the park service over the

years? Maybe even talk about a couple of people that you feel like have been good leaders?

Ginny Rousseau: Just had something on that. And it came up as what is the difference between a leader and a manager? Somebody may manage very well. They may fiscally hit all the, cross all the “t”s and dot all the “I”s. But because a park is well managed, doesn’t mean it has good leadership. And one of the best examples of leadership, again, I’ll go back to Rick Smith, Jim Brady, Jack Morehead. Those set my trajectory. Set my path. And that’s who I always keep kind of going back to.

Ginny Rousseau: But one of the best examples I’ve seen, and actually there’s a follow-up to that, was a visit to Rocky Mountain National Park headquarters. And the superintendent, Vaughn Baker, was the assistant superintendent at Shenandoah when I was there. We used to say always a bridesmaid, never a bride. He’d been like an assistant superintendent multiple times and didn’t get a superintendency until he went to Lake Roosevelt. And then went from there to Rocky. And he’s been at Rocky a long time. But Vaughn would show up out in the field in a flannel shirt and jeans and just talk to you, talk to staff, talk to people. Management by walking around.

Ginny Rousseau: When you walked through the hall at Rocky Mountain, we went in to say hi because one of the people had gone through ranger, two of them, the chief ranger and the chief of interp had gone through my Ranger Skills program years ago. The AO had been the wife of my interp person at Shenandoah, Deb Finninger. She’s the AO there. She’d worked with me in Shenandoah. Vaughn Baker was there from Shenandoah. So it was kind of like old home week. We walked in and just, it was great.

Ginny Rousseau: We were talking with Deb down at the end of the hall. And Vaughn walks from his office down the hall. And people are coming out of their offices and, “Hey, Vaughn,” this and that, and there was just such a sense of not so much just camaraderie, but respect, of admiration. And yet he was so unimposing. He leads by example.

Ginny Rousseau: We recently took the academy kids on two field trips. They have to look at resources at risk at Petrified Forest and at the Flag monuments. The Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater and Wupatki, which is the Flag monument parks. Flag Monument Parks has just gone through a kind of rejuvenation. They just got a new superintendent, Casey Cook, I think is her last name. But Casey Cook, daughter of John Cook. Green blood for decades back. What’s great is her grandfather and her father were both superintendents of Wupatki and Walnut Canyon. And now she’s the superintendent of all three. So, kind of like coming home.

Ginny Rousseau: Anyway, Casey hasn’t been there, she’s been there about a year or so. The superintendent at Petrified Forest has been there probably three or four years. What we, what the kids had to do was meet with all the division chiefs. Ask them about their priorities. What do they do? They divide into groups and I say, if you’ve ever worked maintenance, don’t get in the

maintenance group. Get in a group you don't know. Interp, protection, maintenance, administration and resources. So we have five groups. They have to interview all the division chiefs. They then write a paper on their observations and comparisons of the two parks. And then they have to, as a group, do a slide presentation. Or a PowerPoint. And it has to be a group thing.

Ginny Rousseau: What was so interesting is over and over I heard, leadership. I heard facilitation. I heard support. From the Flag Monument Parks. Petrified, they didn't have the same feeling. There was in-bickering between division chiefs. There was "mine" and "yours." There was kind of an attitude from the superintendent's office of well you guys, I expect you to work it out among yourselves.

Ginny Rousseau: Now, there's a difference. Because Petrified does not have a chief ranger right now. They've got an acting. They just had a new chief of maintenance. They've got a dynamic chief of interp. But Flag Monuments has a very young management team. They've only all been there two or three years. So they're kind of learning.

Ginny Rousseau: But the takeaway from that to the group was if you applied, once you get a job and you've got your foot in the door, as you apply to parks, you need to be as careful and interview a park as to what kind of environment are you going into, what are they going to provide for you, what kind of supervision are you going to be getting when you go there? And it was palatable (Does she mean palpable?), the difference between their opinions of Flag Monuments versus Petrified. And it comes down to leadership. And leadership is leading by example of collaboration, of you know, doing the right thing. Supporting your people. You may be able to manage well, but you may not be a leader.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah. Interesting. Is there anything else that you feel like you want to talk about in terms of your career that we haven't touched on? I mean, we've gone sort of chronologically through. But I just want to give you this opportunity to share anything, any last thoughts or experiences about your career in the park service?

Ginny Rousseau: The only thing, I think, that, and we've talked about this. Because at the Rendezvous, a number of us went to maybe one session or another. And we came out going, you know, they're talking about the same things we did 30 years ago. They're still having the same issues. Dual careers. Seasonal support. Leadership versus management. And it kind of took a lot of us aback. And we said, you know, we're just going to go hit the keg. Because we don't need to sit through this again. And I think that's something that bothers me a little bit, because we all, we all support the national park system. As I explained the difference. The National Park Service seems to be not doing real well. At least, I know it can go in cycles. But where are leaders? Where are the people that are going to

stand up and say, “This is the right thing to do,” and do it, and not just what’s politically correct?

Ginny Rousseau: An example is the Claude Moore Colonial Farm, I told you, that was in the park service and then got out. Or, well, was kicked out. But now doing much better. It is still on park service land. And the lack of leadership or change in leadership in the U.S. park police has really caused some adversarial situations that probably wouldn’t have been there 15 years ago. We don’t have the leaders that—there’s like an arrogance to it. I don’t know, and this is something that a lot of us have talked about over a beer. The shift of who are our superintendents has gone from predominantly, it used to be from within the ranger ranks. Not meaning just protection, because then we were generalist rangers.

Ginny Rousseau: And I know Jack Morehead wrote an amazing article, years ago, in the mid ‘70s, about how important the generalist ranger was, as opposed to specialization, to a law dog. Where you could shift between disciplines to gain experience, to gain understanding. At that point that was who the majority of superintendents were.

Ginny Rousseau: As we progressed, as I said, facility maintenance began to step up to those roles because they developed leadership programs. They gave those folks, here’s what you need to be a chief of maintenance. Gee, now you could be a superintendent. Sue McGill, good example. Went from a chief of maintenance to deputy superintendent at Olympic. And actually, she was a superintendent at Timpanogos Cave, Utah.

Dennis Burnett: One in Utah.

Ginny Rousseau: I can’t remember.

Brenna Lissoway: Yeah, it’s okay.

Ginny Rousseau: But anyway, the point is these leaders were people who understood the full perspective of a park. They understood the whole dimension of it, of what’s needed. If you have an emergency, a maintenance guy can step in just as well as a ranger, almost. I mean, unless it’s a law enforcement. They understand stepping up for unforeseen things going on.

Ginny Rousseau: We started promoting more planners, landscape architect, people who did not have necessarily a lot of field skills. And therefore it changed their perspective on, they became more managers of parks. I can dot the “i”s. I can cross the “t”s. I can not make waves and get noticed by the regional office. Or the Washington office. And I’m not sure that’s been a good thing. It may sound kind of disgruntled of gee, the rangers aren’t competitive anymore. But it’s not. It was more, there was a more holistic approach to it years ago. A generalist approach.

Ginny Rousseau: We talked about specialization. The pros and cons. I think a negative on specialization is we get single-focused people who don’t understand the complexities of managing a park. Of taking care of the people. Of respecting what they have to offer. It’s like sitting in that reorganization



meeting I went and holy shit, I just gave up the farm. But it was the best thing I ever did. Because then they had, they had, what's my word?

Dennis Burnett: Ownership.

Ginny Rousseau: They had ownership. They were involved and they were committed, and by God they were going to do what they could do to make it work. I think we've lost some of that. And every generation probably says that of park rangers that retire, or park, I don't know. But it's just very different. We're not, we've changed. And I'm not always, not sure it's for the better.

Brenna Lissoway: That's an interesting perspective. Thanks for sharing that.

Ginny Rousseau: They can't fire me.

Brenna Lissoway: (laughs) This is true. Well thank you so very much for taking the time to do this interview. And Dennis, thank you very much for sitting patiently and chiming in on occasion to help with names and dates.

Ginny Rousseau: See, we're a team.

Brenna Lissoway: Right. Right. Yeah. Anyway, thank you very much.

[END OF TRACK 2]

[END OF INTERVIEW]