

**Carla Gates discusses her career as a skilled trades electrician
and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

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5Doreen Howard: Doreen Howard. It is October 13, 2005. It is 9:15 a.m. We are in the, uh, labor
6 relations conference room at Fisher Body. Um, we will be interviewing Carla
7 J. Gates. [0:21] Um, Carla, if you could, uh, say your, your name and spell
8 your last name and your address for the record please?
9
10Carla Gates: Carla J. Gates. G-a-t-e-s. 2986 Beech Ridge Drive, Lansing, Michigan 48911.
11
12Doreen Howard: Okay. And go head...
13
14Linda Johnson: And I'm Linda Johnson one of the researchers also here in the room with
15 Carla Gates.
16
17Doreen Howard: Okay. Um, let's start out with, um, [0:51] when did you hire in?
18
19Carla Gates: September 9, 1976.
20
21Doreen Howard: 1976. That's a long time ago. Um, think back on that very first day coming
22 through those doors. [1:08] Give us your impressions of how it felt to come to
23 work for General Motors that first day.
24
25Carla Gates: Actually, I go back a little bit farther than that.
26
27Doreen Howard: Wow.
28
29Carla Gates: When I came in to fill out the application and everybody was hollerin' out the
30 windows when you came into the door wonderin' jeez do I really wanna go to
31 work in this place 'cause it seemed kinda odd. Uh, so just a short time after
32 that, I got a phone call, had to come down, um, Personnel. There was a small
33 group of us, uh, in the office, probably less than 10, and I remember that most
34 of – all but me, uh, they all went to trim, and they sent me to the body shop
35 because they said I looked strong...
36
37Doreen Howard: [laughter]
38
39Linda Johnson: [laughter]
40
41Carla Gates: ...and they needed women in the body shop.
42
43Doreen Howard: Hm. Because you looked strong. Oh, that's funny. Um, so body shop. Um...
44
45Carla Gates: My impression of the body shop?
46
47Doreen Howard: Yeah. [2:06] Tell us a little bit about the body shop at that time.

1
2 Carla Gates: The body shop was nicknamed the jungle, very appropriately. Uh, there were
3 sparks everywhere. There were gigantic weld guns everywhere. I remember
4 thinking what have I gotten myself into? Uh, it was very, uh, disconcerting.
5 Uh, it was hard to know – everything kind of looked the same, so it was very
6 easy to get lost, uh, and, uh, it, it was overwhelming. Very overwhelming, and
7 scary too because, like I said, sparks were flying everywhere from all the weld
8 equipment.
9
10 Doreen Howard: Oh. [2:49] That – the first few days that you hired in, um, a lot of the areas,
11 they tend to have, um, new-hire pranks. Did anybody try to pull any pranks on
12 you when, when you first came in?
13
14 Carla Gates: Well the very, the very first day that I was there, somebody took me out to the
15 area where I was gonna work in, and the boss didn't really have anything to do
16 yet, so he, he asked me ta, to, uh, stock up this bin of these parts, um, the
17 assembly worker was putting on the, on the car. And so I was puttin' these
18 parts in the bin not realizing that there was 2 separate parts and they were
19 'spose to go in certain places in the bin. So the guy let me get it all loaded and
20 then he called the boss and said, "Hey, these are wrong," so he had to quit
21 doin' his job. And, and I didn't get in trouble. Nobody yelled at me, and they
22 all had a good laugh, but I guess that was probably the first prank, and it didn't
23 take very long to happen, probably within the first 2 hours.
24
25 Doreen Howard: [laughter] Yeah, yeah, people like doing that kinda stuff. [3:53] So what job
26 did you end up getting put on?
27
28 Carla Gates: I got a job where I, um, installed the roof bows and then welded the piece in
29 the trunk that held the, uh, hinges for the trunk lid.
30
31 Doreen Howard: Hm. [4:04] Describe a little bit what a hinge bolt is or...
32
33 Carla Gates: Uh, the...
34
35 Doreen Howard: [Inaudible 4:06].
36
37 Carla Gates: The roof, it was actually the roof bows were the support structures for the, uh,
38 roof.
39
40 Doreen Howard: Oh. Okay.
41
42 Carla Gates: Okay. It's just lay those in there and then, uh, had to step onto the body truck
43 that was carrying the body and, uh, bring your weld gun in there and, and then
44 put some welds in on the, uh, on the piece that was holding the hinges for the
45 trunk lid.
46

1Doreen Howard: Oh. Okay. [4:30] So was that, uh, a heavy job pulling that [welding 4:35]?
2
3Carla Gates: Oh yeah...
4
5Linda Johnson: ...gun?
6
7Carla Gates: ...it was pretty heavy. In the morning when you wake up, your hands would be
8 kinda locked into position of the trigger of the gun and then pry them open
9 and then do it again and then you'd pry it open. It'd usually take a little time in
10 the morning before your hands kind of relaxed.
11
12Doreen Howard: [4:51] How old were you when you came in to the plant?
13
14Carla Gates: Eighteen. Just 18.
15
16Doreen Howard: Just 18. At that time, you said they needed women in the body shop. [5:06] So
17 how were you, what was the reception like being one of the few women that
18 were down there in the body shop at that time?
19
20Carla Gates: Well it was kinda interesting 'cause when you would walk through, the guys
21 weren't used to havin' to use the locker room to change their clothes, so you'd
22 walk through and they'd be standin' there in their skivvies puttin' on their
23 coveralls, so I'd just walk by and wave.
24
25Doreen Howard: [laughter]
26
27Carla Gates: And I didn't get too excited about it and they, they didn't, they didn't care, I
28 didn't care. Um, but, uh, the bosses did put a stop to it shortly after, not just
29 me but as the number of women increased, they, they told'm they had to start
30 usin' the locker room. But you could tell they weren't really accustomed to
31 havin' women around, kinda doin' their own thing.
32
33Doreen Howard: Mm-hm. [5:50] Now how long did you do that job in body shop?
34
35Carla Gates: Um, I, I only stayed on that job the, the first time for about 90 days 'cause at
36 the same time, they were looking for female supervisors and, uh, they asked
37 me if I wanted to be a supervisor, and I really didn't have a good handle on
38 what that meant, but they said I could go to days, and so that was real exciting
39 'cause I played softball and you couldn't do that on second shift. And, uh, so I
40 said, "Sure, I'll try it." So...
41
42Doreen Howard: So you did that for a while.
43
44Carla Gates: Yeah. I did that for about 4 years.
45

1Doreen Howard: Oh. Okay. So you weren't here very long, and they moved ya into the
2 management. So that was probably, uh, a different experience going from
3 being on the line to the opposite, of being the boss.
4

5Carla Gates: Yeah, it was very different. And, uh, they took me from the body shop where I
6 actually understood kinda what was goin' on and, and put me in the [cushion
7 6:49] room where I didn't have a clue what was goin' on. It was a whole
8 different world. And, uh, I was young enough to be most of the people that
9 worked there's daughter, and fortunately they were all very kind because I
10 didn't know any more about being a supervisor than I knew about being a
11 doctor...
12

13Doreen Howard: [laughter]
14

15Carla Gates: ...and I couldn't have been a doctor, so.
16

17Doreen Howard: Okay. [7:00] So, um, you said you were there about 4 years and then
18 [inaudible 7:12] then, then where did you move into after that?
19

20Carla Gates: Well back to, um, workin' production in the body shop. Um, I know I had a
21 job, they had a hot sealer application, um, still in the body framing I believe
22 they called it, for the body shop. Um, and started taking classes to prepare
23 myself for the skilled trades test because I knew workin' on the line wasn't
24 somethin' I wanted to do for my whole life.
25

26Doreen Howard: And, um, now [7:42] how long did your, you're currently a skilled trades
27 employee, so how long did it take you from the initial time that you started,
28 um, preparing yourself for, as far as education or the training, how long of a
29 timeframe is it that you had to work on that as far as your training to prepare
30 your, for skilled trades?
31

32Carla Gates: Well I actually started goin' to school and stuff to prepare myself to take the
33 test like in 1980.
34

35Doreen Howard: Okay.
36

37Carla Gates: And so, uh, by the time I – I actually had to take the test more than once, but
38 just continued taking classes and then in 1985, they offered me an
39 apprenticeship in the electrical trade.
40

41Doreen Howard: Oh.
42

43Doreen Howard: [8:28] Now once you get offered an apprentice, uh, what does that mean and
44 what does that entail with that?
45

1 Carla Gates: The program can last up to 4 years. Um, in our case, I think most of us
2 graduated in like 3 because there was overtime and it's based, it's an hours-
3 based program. Uh, we took our training at, uh, Lansing Community College,
4 and, um, then we had our, our field training with our electricians here at, in all
5 the different departments in the plant.
6

7 Doreen Howard: Mm-hm. [9:00] Now as far as skilled trades, you said in the body shop you
8 were one of few, uh, how many women were in the skilled trades at that time?
9

10 Carla Gates: Not many and there's still not many. Um, at the time, um, I remember there
11 being one female electrician and [papers rustling] there were, there was at
12 least one, uh, maintenance supervisor, uh, a female maintenance supervisor
13 that was an electrician. But those are really the only 2 that come to mind. Um,
14 probably 10 or less now.
15

16 Doreen Howard: [9:45] Um, tell me a little bit about, um, how did the males in that group, uh,
17 receive women comin' in to their arena?
18

19 Carla Gates: It was, it was interesting. At one, one situation that I remember really well
20 was one of the older guys, and I, you know, older was a relative term
21 [inaudible 10:10] I was much younger then and he probably wasn't as old as I
22 thought. But I'm guessin' he was 62, and he had been in the trade for a long
23 time and he was in the area where they did construction and I was assigned to
24 work with him and we had to run a lotta wire, a lotta heavy, big wire on a job.
25 And, and I, I don't know what he was thinkin' but I think he was concerned
26 that I, that we were gonna be able to get this done. So I was convinced that no
27 matter what, I was gonna be bustin' my butt, we were gonna do it, and he was
28 gonna be proud of me by the time the day was over. And, uh, sure enough,
29 um, you know, we worked together, everything went really well. And I was
30 pretty young so I was strong enough to be able to keep up with the [inaudible
31 10:53] and stuff. And, uh, and by the time the day was over, he said, he said,
32 "I was concerned, but I'm not now." And, uh, and, and I, I, I mean I felt like I
33 just accomplished a major milestone because, you know, you get the, you get
34 the blessing of the older guys and everybody else kind of falls in line because
35 they all respected them. So, you know, if this guy's sayin', "Hey, she's all
36 right," then you know, you know, you're gonna be all right. Because they
37 kinda look out for ya too. And sure enough, that is what happened.
38

39 Doreen Howard: [11:39] Now as an electrician, are you assigned to one specific area or do you
40 go throughout the plant wherever your assignments take you or how does that
41 work?
42

43 Carla Gates: Traditionally, you, uh, you're either assigned to like the body shop, the paint
44 department, the trim department. The only time that you might end up going
45 anywhere is if you're assigned to the facilities group, and they would answer
46 building maintenance electrical calls, which isn't an area that I chose to spend

1 time in other than my apprenticeship. So most of my time was with the body
2 shop.
3
4Doreen Howard: The body shop. So one way or the other, you pretty much stuck close to that
5 body shop.
6
7Carla Gates: Yeah.
8
9Doreen Howard: Yeah.
10
11Carla Gates: It's familiar.
12
13Doreen Howard: Okay. [12:13] Were you ever, um, on any, uh, layoffs or any – at any time
14 during your timeframe here?
15
16Carla Gates: Right when we topped out of our apprenticeship program, uh, we got laid off,
17 and I'm thinkin' that musta been '88 and I was laid off for about 6 weeks. Um,
18 it's the one time I remember. And then I was, when I was finishing my degree
19 at MSU in '92, um, I think we were off for about 6 months. And, um, both
20 times, uh, knowing that the chance a comin' back was very good that it wasn't
21 a permanent situation. But the, uh, 6-month layoff allowed me to, uh, finish
22 my degree much sooner than I had anticipated, and I was actually very
23 grateful for the time.
24
25Doreen Howard: [13:09] What is your degree in?
26
27Carla Gates: Uh, it was a degree in psychology.
28
29Doreen Howard: Mm-hm.
30
31Linda Johnson: [13:16] Did – now is that unusual for the skilled trades to be off for an
32 extended timeframe. Because usually, it seems like they always – when
33 everybody else was laid off, they still had a lot of skilled trades people still
34 here in the facility working.
35
36Carla Gates: And I think as a trades person, you probably have less likelihood of bein' laid
37 off, but it's certainly, as technology increases [inaudible 13:44], you know,
38 either increase or decrease the needs to trades people depending on what the
39 technology is. So, but...
40
41Doreen Howard: [13:53] And you, you have found that to be true from the time when you first
42 got on the trades till now that they made a lot of cutbacks in the amount of
43 people due to technology?
44
45Carla Gates: Well it's, um, certainly ya do more with less people, um, and, you know, the
46 trouble-shooting techniques have changed. Um, you have computer, um,

1 laptops to assist where you used to have to do everything by hand. Now you
2 have electronics to help. So, um, it's decreased the amount of, uh, travel time
3 and, and, um, the actual time it takes to find problems. So, um, there's
4 definitely been a decrease in the number of trades personnel and, and
5 especially will be for Delta.
6

7Doreen Howard: [14:45] Now, um, do you have a partner that you work with in your trade?
8

9Carla Gates: Um, actually a lot of the time that I spent as an electrician in the body shop
10 and front end sheet metal, it was a one-person station. So there wasn't, uh,
11 there wasn't a partner per se, but if there was an issue that you couldn't deal
12 with, there were troubleshooters you could call for backup and assistance.
13

14Doreen Howard: [15:13] Hm. Now on a, on a normal, average day, take me through a scenario
15 what your typical day would be like. What were some of the things that you
16 did on a typical day?
17

18Carla Gates: My, my day would start in the afternoon 'cause I was a second shift employee
19 for the most part. Um, you'd arrive before the production, uh, people. Make
20 sure all their equipment was, um, up and running and, uh, uh, for, um, stud
21 weld guns and they had parts called collets that had to be changed so that the
22 studs would stay where they were supposed to until they were actually used.
23 And, um, like I said, make sure all their equipment was ready to go when they
24 go here. And then I was on-demand maintenance for any trouble that they had
25 during the evening, uh, if something wasn't workin' right, uh, if it just didn't
26 feel right or anything that I could do to make their night, uh, go better was –
27 you know, I enjoyed makin' their life easier and, and they, in turn, made my
28 life easier because we all got along really well, and, you know, their
29 equipment worked and we were all happy.
30

31Doreen Howard: That was, um, the next question that I was going to talk about. Um, [16:31]
32 talk a little bit about the relationship between the skilled trades and the
33 production people and your feelings on that.
34

35Carla Gates: The majority of the production people and I got along very well. My, my
36 concern, um, the concerns I do have were when, uh, production people tried to
37 do skilled trades jobs insofar as the things they were doing were dangerous
38 not just, uh, "I don't want you to do it because it's my job," it's "I don't want
39 you to do it because you could really hurt yourself and not realize what you're
40 doing." And, you know, they pay me to take that risk, you know, why would
41 you wanna risk your life to do that? [throat clearing] Yeah. People not
42 understanding that by virtue of their actions that, that they could be fatally
43 injured. So I would get very frustrated with that situation to the point that I
44 physically, more than one time, moved a non-maintenance person out of the
45 way so I could do my job. But it was definitely the minority and not the
46 majority and, and just a couple of individuals that, that they were slow to learn

1 that but eventually did learn, [after they didn't] [inaudible 17:43] get hurt and
2 that, you know, they needed to call the proper people to fix their equipment
3 and not just try to do it themselves.
4

5Doreen Howard: [17:53] Um, talk a little bit about the safety background and training and
6 some of the different things that you personally had to go through, um, in
7 order to keep up with changing regulations or whatever it is that you needed to
8 do in order to perform your job.
9

10Carla Gates: Over the, uh, the last 20 years, um, there, there definitely has been a lot,
11 especially in the electrical field as far as arc flash hazards and special clothing
12 and special gloves and, um, knowing where to stand when ya, when ya throw
13 a breaker or dealing with high voltage. Uh, initially, I mean, they, if they
14 needed to turn off the high-voltage breakers, you just did it. Now you have to
15 have special clothes and, uh, special training and, um, situations that, that
16 were probably pretty dangerous and nobody knew, you know, you just did it
17 because you, it was part of your job. Now you know that you have to have,
18 you know, special clothing in the event that there's any kind of an arc flash
19 because the damage from that, you may look like there's nothing wrong when,
20 when you first get an electrical burn, but the, um, after 2 or 3, days, the
21 damage starts to present itself. Your skin dies because you don't have blood
22 supply. Your, your internal organs are all damaged and, uh, it's, it's not
23 something you wanna have happen. Uh, that's why, that's why the – it's
24 important to have training to do your job and that, that people that aren't
25 trained that shouldn't do it and, um, – we have, we have now even wears
26 special gloves you have to wear if you're dealing with, uh, 50 volts [inaudible
27 19:38] voltage or higher. Uh. So. But safety is very much an issue for
28 electricians.
29

30Doreen Howard: [19:51] Um, tell me a little bit about, um, camaraderie and friendships that
31 you developed over your time here.
32

33Carla Gates: Trades or everything?
34

35Doreen Howard: [20:04] Just with trades people, with production [inaudible 20:07], people you
36 encounter throughout our day. Do you have any special, um, friends or people
37 that you do hobbies with here in the plant or outside the plant you guys have
38 [inaudible 20:19] friends?
39

40Carla Gates: Um, you know, you don't, you don't realize how important the people you
41 work with are until you don't see 'em for a while. When I was in training, uh, I
42 was over at Building 66, so I didn't see the people every day that, that I was
43 used to workin' with. And the days I'd come back to the body shop, I, I mean
44 it would take me probably a good hour to get from the door just to where I
45 needed to go 'cause there were so many people that I hadn't seen and you just
46 have to talk to them all and catch back up and visit. So, um, just know so

1 many people. You can't go anywhere, anywhere, even if it's outta town,
2 without runnin' into somebody that you know and work with that, you know,
3 you have to have a conversation with and – but, um, I have probably, um, a
4 small handful of friends that, that I deal with not only inside the plant but
5 outside the plant as well. Um, my best friend was one a the troubleshooters
6 when I was first an electrician, and we've been friends, I've been friends with
7 his whole family. I watched his kids go from bein' kids to bein' adults and
8 watchin' his granddaughter now become, you know, a kindergartener. So, you
9 know, we've been good buddies now for 20 years and, uh...
10
11Doreen Howard: And part of the family.
12
13Carla Gates: Yeah. Yeah. It's a merging of family, you know.
14
15Doreen Howard: Hm.
16
17Carla Gates: So they're part of our family, we're part of theirs, and we're all part of the, you
18 know, GM family.
19
20Doreen Howard: All right. [21:48] Um, now that our plant is closed and, give me a little bit of
21 your feelings of the closure of our plant and, and what that means to you.
22
23Carla Gates: It's gonna be difficulty. I, uh, I have mixed emotions about bein' here when,
24 when they start to tear it apart. I, uh, it's gonna be a significant day, but I don't
25 know if I wanna see it. I do, but I don't, you know? This is, this – I spent more
26 time here than anyplace ever, you know? Twenty-nine years is – I haven't had,
27 I haven't had my house for 29 years, I've never been in one school for
28 anywhere close to that, so, I mean, it's like home. It's, it'll be hard.
29
30Doreen Howard: A significant part of your life was spent here.
31
32Carla Gates: Yeah. Oh absolutely.
33
34Linda Johnson: [22:40] Will you be here when they're doing it? Is that part of your job?
35
36Carla Gates: Um, no, I'll already be at Delta, um, the Delta plant. So I won't have to be one
37 of the ones tearin' it apart. That would, that would be exceptionally tough. I
38 don't know if I could do that. I, that would be like hurtin' your mom, you
39 know. I, I, I don't think I could do that.
40
41Doreen Howard: Um. Yes.
42
43Carla Gates: So.
44

1Doreen Howard: Um, you touched a little bit on the Delta plant. Um, you said you were going
2to continue over there. Um, [23:10] what will you be doing at the Delta plant
3when you get out there?
4

5Carla Gates: Um, I will be in the body shop again, um, as one of the team members. Um, I
6think they have 5 teams in the body shop. I'm not sure, uh, which area I'll be
7in. Not real familiar with them all yet. Um, and, and we're 'spose to rotate
8through all the areas anyway, so, uh, I look forward to the challenge. It's
9gonna be different. It's gonna be exciting. Uh, it, it'll be different than
10everything's so new versus some of the challenges because things were older.
11

12Doreen Howard: [23:53] Um, is there anything at all that, that you've wanted to talk about that
13you might wanna touch base on that we haven't talked about?
14

15Carla Gates: Oh, um, you said you like pranks...
16

17Doreen Howard: Yes I do like pranks.
18

19Carla Gates: ...so I'll, I'll share. I don't know if you'd really call it a prank – [throat clearing]
20excuse me – but the weld, the weld guns in the body shop were water cooled,
21and, uh, it didn't take most of us very long to figure out that if ya hit a piece a
22paper with the weld guns, the welding caps would stick and come off and so
23then you had a really nice high-pressured squirt gun that you could douse just
24about anybody you wanted with water if they were anywhere close. So our
25favorite trick was if we saw paper in the area we were supposed to be welding,
26you had to aim for it and hit it so you could pull that cap and, and spray
27somebody – accidentally, of course...
28

29Doreen Howard: [laughter]
30

31Carla Gates: ...that was close by. And, uh, the favorite time, of course, was when the
32supervisor was in the maintenance crib just on the other side of where the job
33was and, of course, you had to aim the gun away from the work area so the
34supervisor would get wet, and that was always kind of fun. They were pretty
35good natured about it.
36

37[laughter]
38

39Carla Gates: They knew what you were doin', but they took it in stride, and they would
40come out and scold you but not very hard.
41

42Doreen Howard: [25:11] Did you ever get involved in, um, any of the dinners or any of the
43other...
44

45Carla Gates: Absolutely.
46

1Doreen Howard: ...lunchtime activities? Some people did Bible studies or card games or, or
2 anything like that. Did you do, what did you do for your lunches?
3

4Carla Gates: Um, jeez, boy that's a long time ago. Um, actually, at one time, and, and they
5 put a stop to this pretty quick, but they let us do it for a while – is I was a
6 softball player and there was a fella that was a fast-pitch softball pitcher for
7 one of the local teams. And so he would practice pitchin', and I would catch
8 for'm out in the body shop, and they didn't seem to think that was a good idea
9 with all the metal, but we did it for a while and it was pretty fun. Um, I don't, I
10 probably, I probably just ate lunch. I didn't do anything too exciting, but, um,
11 dinner...
12

13Linda Johnson: [26:05] How 'bout...
14

15Carla Gates: ...go 'head.
16

17Linda Johnson: ...how 'bout those dinners maintenance was famous for having at the holidays,
18 you know, where they'd take up the whole aisle way and they'd bring in all
19 their retirees?
20

21Carla Gates: Um, the, the holiday dinners were great because it gave you a chance to see all
22 the retirees that had, not, well probably not all but a lot of the reti-, people that
23 had retired would come back in and you'd see'm and, you know, fortunately,
24 you know, if they were able to be there, they were in pretty good health and it
25 was nice to see them and know that they were enjoyin' their retirement and,
26 uh, I mean it just, it's, I just, that sense of family. I mean, it was not only with
27 maintenance but like with, with all the people here. I mean that's just the
28 overwhelming thing I could think of is it's just been...
29

30Linda Johnson: [26:55] Were you known for a favorite dish to bring to one of these?
31

32Carla Gates: Hmmmm...
33

34Linda Johnson: That they'd say, "Carla, bring...?"
35

36Doreen Howard: [laughter]
37

38Carla Gates: No. I, I, I, cooking is not my strength...
39

40Doreen Howard: [laughter]
41

42Carla Gates: ...so, um...
43

44Linda Johnson: [Inaudible 27:04] cakes?
45

1 Carla Gates: Um, actually, um, yeah. My mom was a better-known cook than I was. They,
2 she could send in stuff that people enjoyed a lot. Um, cakes and, and muffins
3 and stuff. Um, but the thing that I did like to do was just remember events,
4 like people's birthday, you know, and do, and do something. Even if it wasn't
5 a huge party. Um, bring in a cake and just make sure that their day was
6 noticed and everybody knew it was a special day for'm. I had fun with that.
7

8 Doreen Howard: [27:38] Um, you have a few different organizations and volunteer activities
9 outside of the plant, um, can you go into a little bit of what you do for outside
10 activities?
11

12 Carla Gates: Well lately, um, my schooling has been a predominant activity, uh, my
13 master's degree, which is nearly finished. But, um, prior to the beginning of
14 that, I was very active with, um, the Fast Break Club, which is the fundraising
15 group for MSU women's basketball. And, um, I was a very avid supporter,
16 um, for that group for many years, and I got my nieces, who are now 21 and
17 26, uh, very involved with them at, you know, they were 4 or 5, so they spent
18 their whole life supporting MSU women's basketball with their aunt thinking
19 that was just very cool because they go to attend all sorts of functions with the
20 players and, and see some really good role models for, um, for young women.
21 Um, and it was, I think it was, benefited them immensely, and I know I
22 enjoyed it. And, uh, and here last year they were at the Final Four.
23

24 Doreen Howard: Yeah.
25

26 Carla Gates: So you can't ask for any more than that.
27

28 Doreen Howard: [28:57] In wrapping up here, um, is there any, uh, words of wisdom that, that
29 you could offer to maybe some of the new people. I know that when we go to
30 the Delta plant we may be getting some, some new people in there. Um, being
31 a woman in the skill trades arena, some words of wisdom to new people
32 coming in who may wish to get into that arena.
33

34 Carla Gates: Um [sighing], education. I, I mean, education to me is extremely important.
35 Um, GM UAW benefit is [inaudible 29:34]. It pays for classes. You can never
36 have too much education. Nobody can ever take it away from you. Um, take
37 the test, uh. You know, if you get an opportunity to go in skill trades, do it.
38 Um, you know, remember you can always learn something from everybody
39 even if you don't necessarily like who that person is, um, they can always
40 teach you something. Um, have an open mind. Um, know you're gonna work
41 hard. I mean, because it's not always easy. Um, sometimes people won't like
42 you just because you're a woman. I think that's probably less and less now, but
43 it can still happen, but I think if you just do your job and say, "Hey, you know,
44 I'm here, I'm gonna work, I'm gonna do my job," um, that's, that's what we're
45 all about. We're, we're all here, we all have a job to do, and, and, uh, get an
46 education, and it get it done. That's...

1
2Doreen Howard: Very good. All right. Well thank you very much for your time. We appreciate
3 talking with you and it's been very nice.
4
5Carla Gates: Thank you.
6
7Doreen Howard: Thank you.
8
9Linda Johnson: Thank you, Carla.
10
11
12/kj