

**Beverly McKelvey, an African American, discusses her career as a
production worker and UAW member at the Fisher Body plant in Lansing, MI**

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5 Jerri Smith: This is Jerri Smith with the Fisher Body historical team. We're doing an
6 interview today at Local 602 Union Hall in the conference room and we're
7 doing an interview with Bev McKelvey and we're gonna go around the
8 room and introduce ourselves today.
9
10 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter.
11
12 John Fedewa: John Fedewa.
13
14 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher.
15
16 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid
17
18 Mike Fleming: Mike Fleming.
19
20 Jerri Smith: [0:28] And this is, uh, December 15th, 2005, at approximately 11:15 and
21 Bev, would you state your name and spell your last name for us please?
22
23 Beverly McKelvey: Okay. Beverly McKelvey. M-C-K-E-L-V as in Victor E-Y.
24
25 Jerri Smith: [0:47] And your address please?
26
27 Beverly McKelvey: 5230 Renee Street, Lansing, MI, 48911.
28
29 Jerri Smith: Okay. [0:56] And we'd like your, um, seniority [date 1:00].
30
31 Beverly McKelvey: 10/9/79.
32
33 Jerri Smith: Okay. [1:04] And do you remember the first day you walked in the plant?
34
35 Beverly McKelvey: Yes, I do. [laughing]
36
37 Jerri Smith: [1:11] Could you tell us what it was like?
38
39 Beverly McKelvey: Well, it was really scary 'cause I'd always worked in a office and I cried
40 the [laughter] entire night the first night on the line and I had a lotta good
41 friends who worked here and they all came up to visit to give me words of
42 encouragement and tell me I could do it and, you know, now it's really
43 funny [laughter] but then it was terrifyin' 'cause – just more different.
44
45 Jerri Smith: [1:33] Where did you hire in? What department?
46

1Beverly McKelvey: Um, in trim and back then, it was – uh, I think it was called B trim and,
2 um, they did 98s and 88s and I was, uh, puttin' in the quarter glass – not
3 the quarter glass but the trim and I was right next to the quarter glass guy,
4 so, um, the material I worked wit was really – you could pick it up with
5 your two fingers 'cause it was just two pieces of moldin' to put around
6 there and, um, but it was – I had – I didn't know anything about cars. I
7 didn't know the difference in a 98 or 88 and you had to learn the colors
8 and it was a lotta colors and they gave you this computer printout sheet
9 and you would be expectin' a 98 and a 88 would come down the line and,
10 you know – and I didn't know what to do. [laughter] You know, it was my
11 first day on the job and the girl, she was workin' with me, then she'll go
12 like, 'Oh, now we've gotta go,' and you went across the line to get your 98
13 pieces and on the side I was on, all the 88 pieces, so it was really weird
14 'cause you kept goin' across the line instead of havin' all your stock on
15 your side and so, uh, after my first night there, I went home and I had
16 nightmares about bein' run over by a car. Why, I don't know [laughter]
17 but just – 'cause I guess – 'cause I would cross that track all night, so it
18 was pretty funny afterwards, you know, but then, not so.
19

20Doug Rademacher: Beverly, I'm Doug Rademacher. [3:00] Tell me, back to that first day
21 when you, when you got the call to come to g-, uh, to General Motors to
22 Fisher Body Plant, uh, did you report in the front door and what did they
23 do with you? Did you have someone come take you somewhere? How
24 did that all work? 'Cause when you walk in the door, you don't see any
25 vehicles. What happened there?
26

27Beverly McKelvey: Okay, we, um, came in the front and we, um, went upstairs and I can't
28 remember the lady who came and got us, you know, and we went upstairs
29 and, uh, then she, um, she said we're gonna, you know, take you to your
30 department, so I can't even describe how I got there 'cause, you know, I
31 only ever been to medical when I had my physical and I knew how to get
32 there from goin' through the front but the way she took us, I, I can't even
33 describe. I mean, it was just a wonderland to me to see those machines
34 and just see all those people. I had never been around that many people,
35 you know, and just seein' how a car was actually put together 'cause I had
36 never seen that before either, so mostly I was just lookin' at everything. I
37 just don't remember too much else.
38

39Jerri Smith: Cheryl McQuaid.
40

41Cheryl McQuaid: [4:10] Beverly, um, where did you used to work? You said you worked in
42 an office.
43

44Beverly McKelvey: I, uh, worked for the state. I worked – um, when, when I came here, I was
45 workin' at Public Health and I worked in the VD section and I did, like,
46 government reports for fundin' and, um, and I – and Fisher Body was

1 hirin', so I put an application. I was more money than I was makin' and
2 you always wanna make more money and so I decided to put an
3 application and they called me and I came [laughter] – I, you know, I just,
4 just, it was just about the money. I had no idea what I was gonna be doin'
5 or anything.
6
7 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:47] And did you hire in on the day shift or the second shift?
8
9 Beverly McKelvey: Uh, second shift.
10
11 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:53] And do you have children?
12
13 Beverly McKelvey: Yes, I have two. A son and a daughter.
14
15 Cheryl McQuaid: [4:56] What was that like for your family?
16
17 Beverly McKelvey: Um, well, it wasn't that bad for them because [throat clearing] their good
18 friends were keepin' them and the one, um, girl [Bonnie Street 5:06], uh,
19 well, now it's [Bonnie Richardson 5:09] and her mom kept my daughter
20 'cause she was younger and then a good friend kept my son and would
21 send him off to school and everything, so it worked out really well and she
22 worked here and I rode to work with her and her mom babysat, so, you
23 know, it just all fell into place really well.
24
25 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:26] When you worked at the state, did you work during the day?
26
27 Beverly McKelvey: Right. Then I had daycare at Humpty Dumpty Nursery, so, you know,
28 then, then at night, you know, I had to find some people to babysit, so that
29 was different.
30
31 Cheryl McQuaid: [5:40] So, what did you think about second shift in a factory?
32
33 Beverly McKelvey: You know, I didn't think [coughing] anything about it. I – you know, it
34 just, you know, just the way it was. I didn't think that much about it
35 'cause to me – I, you know, I never had a problem if I went to work during
36 the day or at night, so even that wasn't a c-, you know, wasn't somethin' I
37 thought too much of.
38
39 Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [6:10] Um, but, um, how was, was the t-, the transition
40 from going from doing the office setting and the type of p-, personnel and
41 the culture there versus comin' on second shift, night shift, [79 6:22],
42 working on the assembly line in a whole 'nother culture.
43
44 Beverly McKelvey: Like I said, it was terrifying and I, uh, but, you know, I worked around
45 some great people who helped me, like, um, [China 6:35] and [Debbie
46 6:36] and [Debbie] [inaudible 6:39] worked down there on the end. Um,

1 m-, um, Marion Jones and they were really nice and the person who broke
2 me in on my first job was [Arias 6:50] and I think her last name was
3 Walker and she just told me, 'You, you came here to earn a livin'. You
4 didn't, you didn't come here to really be friends or socialize or get close to
5 people. You're here to earn a living and you just don't let anyone talk to
6 you any way. You don't talk to them any way. You respect them and
7 they respect you. That's what it's about.' And so, that's what I took to
8 heart, so I didn't really talk to anybody but the ones I knew, you know,
9 and then James [Henry 7:21], he and I are really good friends and his wife,
10 so he would come and see me. Robert Hall, 'cause my aunt was married
11 to his brother, so, you know, people like that. They were just always
12 stoppin' and, you know, talk to me, so – and then I never talked to the
13 people and it was just... [PA announcement]
14
15 Marilyn Coulter: Go ahead.
16
17 Beverly McKelvey: So, and, and, so they just [throat clearing], they just would all ask me
18 [throat clearing] cat's got her tongue, you know, 'cause I just didn't talk to
19 a lot of people, and, you know, that's just the way it was.
20
21 Cheryl McQuaid: [8:00] And how long did you do that job?
22
23 Beverly McKelvey: I, um...
24
25 Cheryl McQuaid: I'm sorry. Cheryl McQuaid.
26
27 Beverly McKelvey: Okay. Well, I did that until I was laid off and I worked down there and for
28 Doug [Scott 8:11] and he was [laughter] a pretty funny foreman [laughter],
29 so – and then, um, you know, [coughing] I got laid off – uh, I think it was
30 the end, end of the year or somethin' like that, you know, 'cause they start
31 cuttin' back and that's when they started having the problems, you know,
32 with car sales back in the late '70s, early '80s.
33
34 Cheryl McQuaid: Doug Rademacher.
35
36 Doug Rademacher: Beverly, you hired in, you said, October 9th.
37
38 Beverly McKelvey: Mm-hm.
39
40 Doug Rademacher: [8:41] So, part of, uh, of becoming permanent is get 90 days and now did
41 you say you went out the door for the holiday weekend?
42
43 Beverly McKelvey: Well, before that, I had gotten hurt, so I was out on comp, so I, um, my
44 seniority kept going, so, um, I had my time, you know, from being injured.
45 It's not that the job I had, the material you used was so heavy but it was
46 the pounding that I had to do and you had to do a lot of poundin' with

1 your hand and a mallet to make these two moldings fit around that quarter
2 window because it had to be a tight fit 'cause when the [glass 9:23] set the
3 glass in, you couldn't have a water leak 'cause who'd want a car with
4 water drippin' inside? You know, so it had to be a really good fit, so I did
5 a lot of pounding and not bein' – ever havin' done a physical job, you
6 know, just always in a office, so I, uh, like, uh, had to have two operations
7 on my hand and so, therefore, you know, I was just out on comp.
8
9 Jerri Smith: Mike Fleming.
10
11 Mike Fleming: [9:51] Uh, Beverly, so how long were you workin' before you sustained
12 [inaudible 9:56]?
13
14 Beverly McKelvey: I, I worked, um, about 10 days.
15
16 Mike Fleming: [10:01] And sustained injuries enough to go out on worker's comp?
17
18 Beverly McKelvey: Mm-hm.
19
20 Mike Fleming: [10:06] Can you explain a little bit how that worked for you back then?
21 Did you go through the medical department? Did you go through therapy?
22 What did they do?
23
24 Beverly McKelvey: Okay, I went through medical but when it happened, since it happened on
25 a Friday night, and when you're new, you – and I didn't really know
26 anybody too much and so I just kept working. I just, you know, I felt this
27 pop in my hand and it just hurt and it was almost the end of the shift, like
28 maybe 30 minutes, so I just simply kept working. I'm like...
29
30 Female: Yeah.
31
32 Beverly McKelvey: ...you know, it probably not anything and so the next morning, on a
33 Saturday morning, I woke up and I couldn't use my hand, so I had to go to
34 the emergency room and they, uh, like, put it in a half a cast and
35 everything and they told me I had to see a orthopedic surgeon and so that
36 Monday I reported back to medical and they examined me and everything
37 and they had me just come down every day for some treatments, you
38 know, like the – back then, really scary. Used to stick your hand down in
39 this vat of hot wax and then they would wrap [throat clearing] it up and,
40 um, treatments like that and put in the whirlpool and, uh, so I did that
41 every day and then finally after I saw the doctor and I had to have the
42 surgery and so then after that, I, you know, I didn't come down for any
43 more treatments.
44
45 Jerri Smith: [11:29] And how long did you stay on, uh, night shift?
46

1Beverly McKelvey: Um, until I was called back to work in '81 and then I was on day shift,
2 which I didn't care [laughter] a whole lot for 'cause that's awfully early in
3 the morning, especially in the paint department and so I was on that for
4 maybe six months and I got bumped to nights, you know, thank goodness,
5 so I found out I really didn't like workin' day shift, you know, in the
6 factory.
7

8Jerri Smith: This is Jerri Smith. [11:59] Um, you prefer the night shift then?
9

10Beverly McKelvey: Right.
11

12Jerri Smith: [12:01] And you stayed on it ever since?
13

14Beverly McKelvey: Right.
15

16Jerri Smith: In which department – you said you were in trim when you hired in.
17 [12:07] Have you always stayed in trim or have you moved to other
18 departments?
19

20Beverly McKelvey: And – when I came back in '81, I went to paint and I was workin', um,
21 [laughter] for this really good foreman, Ray [inaudible 12:19]. I, I really
22 love that guy. He's, he's crazy and I was, uh, workin' up there putting
23 [mateface 12:24] on and, um, you just – uh, 'cause it came – back then,
24 you put'm on in paint and then went to trim. I guess trim people knew
25 what to put on the job or whatever and, uh, so then I did that job – god, it
26 must'a been until we went down in '84 and all you had to do was stick the
27 paper on the front of the job and then I would, uh, put the two bumper
28 guards in – you know, where your tag went on the back of a Cutlass, and
29 then in the 98s, I would screw in two rubber bumper washer things into
30 the deck lid and close it.
31

32Jerri Smith: [13:03] Could you explain what a deck lid is?
33

34Beverly McKelvey: That would be your trunk, so – and, um, and so I was up on this ramp by
35 myself, so that was really nice, you know, just me on this ramp and I could
36 see everybody and I had no problem with being there on that ramp by
37 myself and across from me it was, uh, the other person doin' the job on the
38 M line and back then, it has been changed to the M line and the A line, so,
39 um, i-, it was a fun job. I mean, it was easy to do and, uh, I enjoyed the
40 people, so I just liked it.
41

42Jerri Smith: Mike Fleming.
43

44Mike Fleming: It sounds as though, um, [throat clearing] Beverly you've been through
45 more than one layoff in your time here.
46

1Beverly McKelvey: Right. I went through that one and then in '84, that was my second
2 layoff...
3
4Mike Fleming: Okay.
5
6Beverly McKelvey: ...and that was when, uh, we were gonna start making a new job and I,
7 um, I had, uh, I had put in to work over in the two-tone area and so one
8 Sunday evening – it was about 6:00, I got a call, like, could I come to
9 work the next day from, um, uh, Keith Ward and I go, like, 'Okay. What
10 time?' He go, like, 'Six o'clock,' and I go, 'You startin' at six in the
11 evening now?' [laughter] and he go, 'No, like, six in the morning,'
12 [laughter] and he go, like, 'Oh, I know you don't like bein' here that early
13 but you come, you know, come in,' and – but I end up goin' to repair and
14 so that was totally different 'cause you're all locked in a certain – you
15 know, 'cause you were contained in that one area and so, i-, it was
16 different. You know, I had always been out in the open spaces and you
17 just see people goin' by and in repair, unless you got the coveralls on, you
18 don't come in there. You're just, like, in another little world to me.
19
20Mike Fleming: So, you've been through at least two layoffs. [14:49] Were either of'm a
21 significant amount of time or not very much time?
22
23Beverly McKelvey: Well, the one from when I was injured, now, that was the longest because
24 you figure I went out a year, like, the end of '79, 1st of '80 and then durin'
25 that time, I had two operations and I didn't come back 'til March of '81.
26
27Mike Fleming: Okay. [15:08] Have you been through any strikes at all?
28
29Beverly McKelvey: Just the one, uh, and I think that was the one that only lasted about three
30 days back when they wanted to shut down for [mass relief 15:19]...
31
32Mike Fleming: Mm-hm.
33
34Beverly McKelvey: ...and so, that was the only one I experienced and that wasn't long.
35
36Mike Fleming: Okay. Um, through, through the change of coming from – you were in
37 trim. [15:29] Was that, was that, uh, B line trim you said?
38
39Beverly McKelvey: Right.
40
41Mike Fleming: And you went into the paint shop. [15:34] Can you – was there a
42 difference in the type of people between trim and paint? Is there a
43 difference – was there were more women, less women? What, what was it
44 like?
45

1Beverly McKelvey: Well, what I – I didn't look at it as men and women. I looked at the noise
2 factor and how clean it was.
3

4Mike Fleming: Okay.
5

6Beverly McKelvey: Um, you know, paint to me is pretty quiet until Friday, tsk, and that's
7 when it got loud and people – I had never seen this before 'cause I had
8 never been in a factory. They start beatin' on a table and then the next
9 person'd beat and it'd go down the line and I'm like, 'I think these people
10 are crazy, right?' Then someone would start hollerin' and then the next
11 person'll holler and it'd go down the line and – but it was clean, you
12 know. I liked that part [laughter]. The floor looked cleaner but it was like
13 – I was like, 'It must be a lotta young people down here or something,'
14 you know, 'cause they do little silly stuff like this on Friday and then
15 when I got to paint, it seemed to be more mature people 'cause they were
16 more quieter to me but, like, the paint department's more dirty and noisy,
17 so I – you know, I looked at it like the noise factor and the cleanliness of
18 the departments and not the people, you know.
19

20Mike Fleming: Mm-hm.
21

22Beverly McKelvey: So, that's what I [inaudible 16:50].
23

24Mike Fleming: When you're talkin' about silliness and the types of things they did there.
25 [16:56] When you came in, were there any particular initiations that you
26 seen people had to go through, pranks or whatever pulled on individuals
27 that you might've known of and – at the time that you came in or the time
28 that you were in the paint or trim?
29

30Beverly McKelvey: Now – no, I didn't see anything like that probably because I was older too.
31 You figure most people come in here at 18 or 19 and I was in my late 20s,
32 so that probably made a difference for me, so – but, you know, I, I just
33 never saw anything. Again, I, I – when I have free time, I read a book or
34 something, so I don't spend a lotta time with other people who probably
35 do things like that or, you know. I, I'm just not into being around a crowd
36 who – well, how do you say? Like they do what everybody else is doin'?
37

38Mike Fleming: Mm-hm.
39

40Beverly McKelvey: Even in the shop, I, I just don't do it.
41

42Mike Fleming: [17:56] So, did you all have any dinners, um, special occasions where you
43 had holiday festivities? Anything like that in your area?
44

45Beverly McKelvey: Oh, definitely. Especially when I worked, um, on 17 for Ray and we
46 always celebrated, um, the holidays, Christmas, and we'd do the big

1 dinner and back then, you had the [inaudible 18:14]. If anybody know
2 anything about [inaudible 18:16], it is a nasty job and they were like
3 down...
4

5Mike Fleming: It is.
6

7Beverly McKelvey: ...in a booth and they were farther back in the area and we were up to the
8 front, so we would always do the dinners where they came and ate first
9 because, you know, they had to get clean and we figure everybody else
10 could get the relief guy to get'm off to come and get food but we always
11 made a point at any dinner to make sure those people were first because I
12 felt like hey, they did the work and they had the nastiest job in that
13 department and we had – and that was the worst job in the whole
14 department up there.
15

16Mike Fleming: [18:50] How about collections for people that might've had some
17 hardships within their families and, and those types of things?
18

19Beverly McKelvey: Now, that – I don't remember anyone having anything like that. Only
20 thing we did was when someone had a baby and we didn't care – if it was
21 the guy who worked there and his wife had a baby, we'd give him a
22 shower just like we would do the female, so I don't remember anyone
23 having any family members to die when, when I worked on, on 17 in that
24 area at all.
25

26Jerri Smith: How 'bout the – Jerri Smith. [19:24] How 'bout the, um, supervisor, uh,
27 um, techniques? Have they changed over the years from when you first
28 went in to when we left the plant?
29

30Beverly McKelvey: Well, I think so because when I first hired in, every supervisor I had knew
31 my name and knew me and they talked to you and they were on – they
32 came to the line and they had conversations with you and they knew what
33 you were doin' and they could do the job. Now – and I – and like I said, I
34 mean, I enjoyed all the supervisor I had, like Ray [inaudible 20:03], Ron
35 [inaudible 20:04], even Keith Ward, you know [laughter]. I just
36 enjoyed'm and, and they just treated you like people because I've always
37 had this attitude I am not a child and some foremans give you this attitude
38 that you are a child and you should be submissive to them when you work
39 with them. Well, I have the exact opposite attitude. We're all adults in
40 here. They don't hire children to work in the factory, so, uh, and, and, and
41 that's the way I am. I had – for a while there I had this troublemaker label
42 on me [laughter] 'cause, I mean, I just didn't let him talk to me like I was
43 a kid and I talked to'm and I, you know, let him know, you know, I not
44 gonna be disrespectful but you're not gonna be disrespectful to me.
45 You're not gonna scream at me and definitely nobody's gonna curse at
46 me, you know. That's just the way I – it, it was for me.

1
2 Jerri Smith: [21:00] So, what made a good one or a bad one? Just the same thing you
3 said that, that just if they treated ya equal and like a person instead of...?
4
5 Beverly McKelvey: Right, and, and, and, you know, I guess I've been real lucky 'cause I've
6 never had a supervisor who's been messy or nasty. I've always worked in
7 a area where you almost supervised yourself 'cause I know some people
8 say the supervisor's always lookin' over their shoulder and when I worked
9 for Ray, he stayed down wherever he stayed at. Unless you needed
10 somethin' or he just wanted to talk to you about something, you didn't see
11 him and then when I worked in the metal clean area, we were isolated, so
12 the supervisor didn't spend time back there. He had to be over on repair
13 with the people who need to be supervised, so I guess I've, uh, just never
14 had that problem. I guess I can't compare too much 'cause I've never had
15 a bad one.
16
17 Jerri Smith: Cheryl McQuaid:
18
19 Cheryl McQuaid: Cheryl McQuaid. Um, you had mentioned that you worked for Doug
20 [inaudible 22:01] when you first hired in.
21
22 Beverly McKelvey: Mm-hm.
23
24 Cheryl McQuaid: And you said he was a funny guy. [22:04] What was funny about him?
25
26 Beverly McKelvey: Well, [throat clearing] okay. Now, you know how when you come in
27 some days and you wanna go home? Well, it depend on how good of a
28 lunch you had that day and he compare lunches and whoever had the best
29 lunch went home. [laughter] So, it was like the women were in
30 competition. They want to go home, they bake him a cake or something
31 like – or a pie or whatever. [laughter] So, it, it was, [laughter] it was, it
32 was eye opening and since I worked for the state, I never seen anything
33 like that but i-, it was the way he operated.
34
35 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. [22:37] Beverly, what was the nicest thing you ever
36 made [coughing] for [inaudible 22:40].
37
38 Beverly McKelvey: Well, since I don't cook, I never made anything for him. [laughter]
39
40 Doug Rademacher: Beverly, Doug Rademacher again. You said that, um, you saw a change
41 as far as the supervision but you said you didn't really ever have a bad
42 supervisor. [22:59] Did you notice as we came to an end of the Fisher
43 Body Lansing Car Assembly Plant that the corporation had started hiring
44 youngsters and they no longer were permanent supervisors? Did you
45 experience any of them?
46

1Beverly McKelvey: I, I did for, um, uh, just a little while and I cannot call his name because
2 right after that, Nate came back. Now what's Nate last name? I can't
3 even think of...
4

5Male: Hall.
6

7Beverly McKelvey: Yeah, Nate Hall came back because he had retired and he took over that
8 area, so he was still [inaudible 23:41] but since I had worked for him years
9 before and I knew him, it was just like I still had a, a regular supervisor
10 again, so I just had one of those other types for just a real short period of
11 time and like I said – and by being isolated in the metal clean area,
12 supervisors don't [laughter] tend to come to see you unless you call them
13 'cause, I mean, you just don't need one, so they spend all they time in – on
14 repair.
15

16Jerri Smith: Marilyn Coulter.
17

18Marilyn Coulter: [24:10] Um, could you please tell us what metal clean is? What did you
19 have to do in metal clean?
20

21Beverly McKelvey: Well, metal clean is the first department in the paint department and we
22 feed from the body shop and the jobs are just raw metal and it looks just
23 like a car wash and you have, uh, soap [throat clearing] sprayin' onto the
24 car just like you would go to the car wash. You have the brushes goin'
25 and, uh, we just looked at the metal for, like, excess [solder 24:37] or
26 anything that would be on there before it goes through the phosphate
27 system. You wanna take all that off 'cause you're gonna phosphate it and
28 that would have to be sand back down to the metal and we would, um, put
29 a door hook in, which was just a little piece of metal you could balance on
30 your finger and stick it in the frame of the body and also in the door so
31 [coughing] the phosphate would coat inside the door and, um, and, and we
32 would [coughing] [throw 25:05] this – we call it the rifle [coughing] [bolt
33 25:06] but really it was just the – a latch that would keep the car from
34 floating off in the phosphate system when it went through the tank and
35 that was it, so I did that job for like 18 years. I enjoyed myself [laughter]
36 back there.
37

38Male: Cheryl McQuaid.
39

40Cheryl McQuaid: [25:23] Um, Beverly, how many people worked back in that area?
41

42Beverly McKelvey: Um, it was two on each line at the end. Before that, it was five on each
43 line before they start cuttin' jobs, so, uh, you tend to been pretty close to
44 each other because we only saw each other. The only time we had visitors
45 was if people were lost or you actually had to come back there for

1 somethin', so other than that, you didn't see other people, so we were
2 really close to each other.
3

4Cheryl McQuaid: [25:53] And did you have, like, a partner?
5

6Beverly McKelvey: Uh, the person across from me and he did the exact same thing and, uh, so,
7 I mean, it's just [laughter] – I guess 'cause it's, it's not a hard job. It's just
8 that the smell and the wetness and people didn't like to work back there
9 for that reason. I mean, you weren't doin' a real physical job, it was just it
10 was wet and, uh, and it just smelled bad because of the different chemicals
11 they used to go through those – I think it's like nine stages or more back
12 there.
13

14Cheryl McQuaid: [26:28] And as a – as – because of the fumes and everything, were there –
15 was there special safety equipment that you had to have or...?
16

17Beverly McKelvey: No, back there, the only thing you needed was ear plugs and, uh, green
18 rubber gloves because you dipped your hand in the soap and some people,
19 the soap irritated and some it didn't and since it was a high noise area, it
20 was mandatory to wear ear plugs.
21

22Cheryl McQuaid: [26:52] And why was it so noisy?
23

24Beverly McKelvey: Uh, because of all them – um, okay, like your, um, [throat clearing] your
25 automatic sprayers and like I said, you – it looked just like a car wash.
26 You know how the brushes are rotatin' in the car wash? You had that
27 rotation and you had the – uh, just – and then you had another system
28 where it start sprayin' on it and it was just a lot of machinery back there
29 just runnin' those different things and then over our head was the conveyer
30 system where the job – the, um, the, the thing went back to the body shop
31 – what the car was on and so that was over our head flowin' back to the
32 body shop.
33

34Cheryl McQuaid: A, another question. [27:32] Um, you said that it started out there were
35 five people and then the jobs – jobs were eliminated. [throat clearing] Did
36 you take on that extra work? Were robots brought in? Where did that
37 work go?
38

39Beverly McKelvey: Okay, that was when they installed the car wash system with the brushes
40 and so, like, uh, my partner and I, we stood on the floor and we did the
41 sides and then you had two people on a ramp who did the hood of the car,
42 the roof of the car, and the trunk of the car, so they eliminated those two
43 people and, uh, put in the, the automatic system and then the person who
44 simply put the – that trunk latch in, they eliminated that job and had it sent
45 to the body shop, so the person in body shop makes sure the trunk was
46 secured to the body.

1
2 Cheryl McQuaid: Okay.
3
4 Jerri Smith: Mike Fleming.
5
6 Mike Fleming: [28:26] Beverly, have you ever worked any changeovers?
7
8 Beverly McKelvey: Oh no.
9
10 Mike Fleming: [28:32] Um, so, [throat clearing] was there a reason why you didn't?
11
12 Beverly McKelvey: Well, I figure [laughter] I worked enough and it – and where I worked at
13 was extremely hot in the summer and it was warm in the winter, so when
14 it was time to – for vacation, I was gettin' the heck outta Dodge. [laughter]
15
16 Mike Fleming: [throat clearing] [28:51] Have you had any, um, involvement with your
17 local union?
18
19 Beverly McKelvey: Well, not in the last – I think I've been involved, like, the last four years.
20 I, um, I'm on the election committee and I was on the women's committee
21 and now I volunteer for the women's committee and I'm still on the
22 election committee.
23
24 Mike Fleming: [29:10] So, what are some of the things you've done since you've been
25 with those different committees? What do you do?
26
27 Beverly McKelvey: Well, with the women's committee, I've done a Christmas party with
28 Santa and worked at the picnic doin' the kids' games and then, um, the
29 election committee's been really a eye opener. You know, before I was
30 ever on any committee when there was an election and I'd always say,
31 'Oh, yeah, they elect whoever they wanna elect.' You know, we always
32 say that when it comes to politics [laughter] even national level, so then –
33 and, you know, all the people say the same thing, so since I've been on the
34 election committee, I've learned a lot, so when people say, 'Oh, it's all
35 rigged,' and I say, "No, it's not," 'cause I know now what it's about. You
36 know, I've set there and have counted and double count and you check, so
37 now I know.
38
39 Jerri Smith: Cheryl McQuaid.
40
41 Cheryl McQuaid: You mentioned that you didn't work the changeovers because it was hot in
42 the summers and warm in the winters. [30:09] Did you ever experience
43 any extra heat relief because of where you worked or was that not in
44 effect?
45

1Beverly McKelvey: No, we didn't get heat relief probably because it was such a open area
2 [throat clearing] unlike the paint booths, who did get heat relief and in the
3 metal clean area, you're just on the ramp and – because the water has to
4 drip somewhere and you have these pans to recycle but it's just all open
5 and so they figure well, you've got all these fans and it's open and you're
6 not locked in a booth with coveralls and you can just wear your regular
7 street clothes. You know, you can wear shorts and – so, you know, you
8 could be as comfortable if you want to be.
9

10Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. [30:52] What was your best job and what was your worst job
11 that you've done so far?
12

13Beverly McKelvey: Well, my worst job would be the one in trim where I got hurt 'cause I got
14 hurt on it, not that it was so bad, and I assume the best job would be back
15 in metal clean since I stayed there so many [laughter] year and people say,
16 'Why don't you do somethin' else? It's so hot back here and it smell back
17 here.' But I would always say, "Well, why do I wanna go somewhere and
18 work hard?" You know? It smells bad. It's hot. You know, I can deal
19 with it. Drink more water, you know? So, I, I – so I guess that would be
20 the best job I ever had.
21

22Marilyn Coulter: Marilyn Coulter. [31:30] Bev, working back there, was it hard to get
23 emergency reliefs being secluded like that? How, how did that work for
24 you when you needed emergency relief?
25

26Beverly McKelvey: Well, you know, we were the type – since we're all so close and we still
27 are. Even though we're not workin', we still keep in touch with each
28 other. If – like, one day I think Darlene slipped and fell and broke her
29 wrist, so what you did, everyone just double up. Someone got on the
30 phone, someone else got her husband, and it was that type of mentality
31 until you got the help you needed.
32

33Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
34

35Beverly McKelvey: So – and that's the way we always worked. If somethin' happened on one
36 line...
37

38Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
39

40Beverly McKelvey: ...and we needed, um, some, you know, body back there, I would go and
41 do Dave's job, he would get on the phone and since he knew a lot about
42 the equipment – the skilled trade guys usually had to ask him how to do
43 something back there – and I'd work his job while he showed them how to
44 fix the problem and so we just, uh, we just tend to do it that way, so we,
45 we didn't have any problems with gettin' help. It was just, you know,
46 e'rebody just worked together until we got it.

1
2 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Beverly, you said you worked up in – originally in
3 trim and that you took that person that told you to – you came here for a
4 living and you said you stayed quiet and kept to yourself. Now, further on,
5 you said you – it was more like a family. [33:02] Now, did you think of
6 your coworkers as brothers and sisters as they'd call it in the, in the union
7 movement?
8
9 Beverly McKelvey: Yes, now, in the, in the metal clean area, I, I did because like I said, we're
10 all still close and we still talk. I just talked to a couple of 'm this weekend
11 and, and, you know, open houses we get together, weddings, I mean, it's
12 just like, uh, anything personal – like Dave [Fisher 33:27], I call him, talk
13 to him and, um, uh, Stephanie and Stanley and, you know, we, we all have
14 each other phone number, we know where each other live [coughing] and
15 been to each other's houses.
16
17 Male: Excuse me.
18
19 Beverly McKelvey: It's, it's that, you know, I, I guess [throat clearing] I look at them as family
20 because I spent a lotta time with them and I could talk to them about
21 anything and I didn't worry about them going out tellin' anybody 'cause it
22 was really strange. Even when we took a break, we rarely ever left that
23 area. We would go to the restroom but we s-, we ate lunch back there. It
24 just that we didn't, didn't tend to go out – I guess – we used to call it the
25 other world. That's what we called the other part of Fisher Body and we
26 just tend to stay back there for just about everything we did.
27
28 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. [34:21] H-, has a coworker impacted your family life? I
29 mean, has one of the people around you really impacted your family life?
30
31 Beverly McKelvey: Well, I would think Dave because any time I had any personal problem,
32 even when my sister died last year and, you know, he was always, um, you
33 know, makin' sure he got with me, how she was doin' and, you know,
34 called me at home after she die and, and, it, it's – so, I would say yes
35 because th-, I mean, e-, you know, it's just weird that we're all so close
36 because we're white and we're black but you don't see it as bein' white
37 and black. We just see it as we're this group'a people and we're together
38 and, and, and we'll, and we'll do anything for each other. You know what
39 I mean? And, and if I call him and say I need this, he'll do it, like, you
40 know, and his wife, she'll just, like, she'll say a few words, she'll go,
41 'Okay, here's Dave,' and we might talk for a couple hours and it's just
42 that, you know, I know her too and we get together but it's like, you know,
43 I could tell him anything [throat clearing] and he could tell me anything
44 and we can discuss anything and [throat clearing], I mean, it's like – I
45 guess that's what you would call your brother, your sisters 'cause that's
46 the way we are and it's – I didn't think about it that way at first but it is.

1
2Male: Marilyn Coulter.
3
4Marilyn Coulter: [35:52] Was that the only area that – I know you were there the longest
5 but was that the only area where you felt that type of closeness to your
6 other workers?
7
8Beverly McKelvey: Yes, I did because, like, I [throat clearing] – like I said, I worked on repair
9 and I didn't care that much for that group. It was like – it was three
10 groups. You had the people in the [coughing] booth because – they're in
11 the booth and they're wit each other. Then you had the ones who were
12 outside the booth in this section. Then you had the ones that were down
13 the other end who were sandin' and stuff, so I, you know, I didn't think of
14 them that way and I was up [coughing] in [21-2 36:30] for a few months
15 and that was that line where they did the final polishin' and I didn't see
16 them – you know how you, you can just feel it with people? You're either
17 gonna – you either, either with'm or you're not. You know, you got
18 somethin' in common – somethin' and I didn't have anything in common
19 with them, you know? It's just the way it was, I guess.
20
21Marilyn Coulter: Um, one more question for me. Um, you – having worked in trim and
22 having worked in paint also and it's like you said, back where you worked
23 with, with the small group of people, it didn't matter that people were
24 black or white, you just got along. [37:16] Once again, is that – was that a
25 unique situation as far as that not being a problem or did you find that in
26 the other areas that you worked also?
27
28Beverly McKelvey: But I – it wasn't a problem in the other areas but it just, like – like I said,
29 it, it was just that we had nothin' – we didn't click...
30
31Marilyn Coulter: Mm-hm.
32
33Beverly McKelvey: ...like I did when I got in this area. It's – I think it was just the people.
34 You know, some people you have things...
35
36Marilyn Coulter: In common.
37
38Beverly McKelvey: I mean, it's not like – even in the metal cleaning area, it's not like we all
39 did the same 'cause I like to read and work puzzle. Dave liked [laughter]
40 to listen to the radio and, you know, I mean, that way, we didn't have
41 anything in common at all and the other girl, she liked to play the
42 numbers, so she was always readin' those number books and Stanley just
43 listened to the radio, so it's, it's not even like we all had anything in
44 common at all but it's just – we did. You know, it's – I guess it's just – I
45 just – I can't explain it. It was just there.
46

1 Marilyn Coulter: Just different members of the family, right?
2
3 Mouth breathing Yeah.
4
5 Marilyn Coulter: Thank you.
6
7 Jerri Smith: Doug.
8
9 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. Beverly, you worked in trim and you worked in paint.
10 Now, a lot of people never ventured outside of their departments. [38:26]
11 Did you ever have a chance where you went to the body shop, whether to
12 visit someone or to walk through, or did you [coughing] [inaudible 38:32]
13 first time on a tour? [coughing] What did you think of that?
14
15 Beverly McKelvey: Okay, the first time I went to the body shop was when they had the first
16 tour of the plant and I swear before god I thought it was a science fiction
17 movie. [laughter] I had, I had never ever seen anything like that in my life
18 and the only thing I remember was gettin' burned by one'a those weld
19 sparks and I don't care what people say about you don't get burned when
20 they shoot those things across the floor at ya, they burn ya, and I had
21 never, ever wanted to go down there again after I took that first tour.
22 [laughter]
23
24 Doug Rademacher: So, I have a question. Did you – you worked all those days. You knew
25 you got hurt up in trim and the environment was, was, uh, open and there
26 were a lot of people. [39:18] In the body shop when you saw that people
27 had come to work every day while you were up in that special place up in,
28 in that wash booth, could you imagine, uh, the, the life that those people
29 every day came to work and worked in that environment? Did it ever
30 cross your mind?
31
32 Beverly McKelvey: Now, this is what I used to tell people. I know I've been really, really
33 fortunate. The hardest job I've ever had in Fisher Body was the one in the
34 trim and my first day in metal cleaning, I complained about my fingers
35 hurtin' and [laughter], uh, 'cause, uh, you know, 'cause of the door hook
36 and we had a [coughing] old fashion kind where you had to squeeze but
37 it's like that was my only complaint and I said, um, I do feel sorry for
38 everyone who's just [coughing] really workin' hard around here but I'm
39 just really lucky. I just simply lucked out, you know, and I did used to
40 think about people who were work, workin' hard. You know, I really did
41 and I used to say, 'Those are some heck'a some good people,' 'cause I
42 don't think I could'a handled it. I really don't. I, I just, um, never worked
43 hard all the years I've been there and that is really strange [coughing]
44 because my first job on repair and I, uh, had to put a sh-, um, sheet of
45 paper on the door. I simply paper the door if you were paintin' somethin'
46 on that side so it wouldn't overspray. Then I got the job where you

1 cleaned up before they painted. Then I went upstairs and I'm just wipin'
2 between the, the pickup guy and the polishin' guy, just wipin' so he could
3 see and then back there in metal cleaning where I'm not doin' too much'a
4 anything, so those are the jobs I've had around there. I don't know how I
5 lucked into'm.
6
7 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. [41:10] When we go to the new plant [at LDTU 41:12], do
8 you plan on working out there [coughing]?
9
10 Beverly McKelvey: Yeah, I gotta go.
11
12 Jerri Smith: What part of the plant did you put in for?
13
14 Beverly McKelvey: [laughter] I, I put in for environmental and I didn't get it because I was
15 prayin' I would and then I had next QC, which I got one of those but I am
16 really terrified of goin' to the new plant because I've never worked hard at
17 the old plant, so I'm really terrified of havin' to have to really work and,
18 you know, the unknown is scary and I have no idea how to really work
19 after all the years I've done nothin'.
20
21 Jerri Smith: [41:50] Could you explain what QC is?
22
23 Beverly McKelvey: Well, that's quality control. That as much as I know [laughter] and, um,
24 the job I picked, I don't have the slightest idea what it is. It's that a friend
25 of mine, [Lori Patterson 42:03] had to go Thursday and I had to go this
26 past Monday, which was the 12th and she told me what she picked, so the
27 first job the lady said was the one where you drive the car off the line
28 across the rattle track and either takes – drive it to repair or to the buy
29 thing and I was prayin', like, please let me get that, let me get that. First
30 guy they call, he's on second shift with me and it was just one open and he
31 took that. After that, I didn't hear anything I wanted 'cause when she got
32 to explainin' these jobs, I was going, like, 'That's gonna be a lotta work!'
33 So, I said, what, whatever my – you have my friend [Lori Patterson 42:39]
34 name on there. I said, "Whatever she pick, if it's anything on second shift,
35 could I have it?" And she said, "Oh, there's one left," and I said, "Thank
36 you," and what it's about, I couldn't tell you. [laughter] She just told me it
37 was pretty good and to try to get it, so that's what I did, so when I have to
38 go for trainin' is when I'll know more. [throat clearing]
39
40 Marilyn Coulter: Bev, Marilyn Coulter. [43:05] Um, how long have you lived in Lansing?
41
42 Beverly McKelvey: I lived here since I came here. Um, when I finished high school in '71,
43 my aunt and uncle, they – she worked at Olds and he worked at Motor
44 Wheel and their son was spendin' the summer wit us and so I brought him
45 home and I simply stayed here and I never went back home.
46

1Jerri Smith: [43:28] Where were you from?
2
3Beverly McKelvey: Birmingham, Alabama.
4
5Marilyn Coulter: [43:31] Ah, so coming to Lansing and, and they worked at Oldsmobile,
6 what had you heard about working in the factory before you came here?
7
8Beverly McKelvey: I hadn't heard anything. I didn't know anything about it and, like I said, I
9 just came to bring their son home. [laughter]
10
11Marilyn Coulter: Well, since you've been here, we've been through a lot of name changes.
12 [43:54] Um, can you tell us about how you felt about the name changes
13 and how you feel about the whole factory, this plant being closed after you
14 had own little corner for over 18 years.
15
16Beverly McKelvey: Well, I, I don't even, I don't even go with the name change. I always call
17 it Fisher Body. I, you know, I always have and I still do because I noticed
18 one time, I tried to call it whatever they changed to one time – was it LCA
19 or something and the person go, like, 'What is that? You mean...?' and I
20 said Fisher Body. Oh yeah, Fisher Body and so it's like the people don't
21 accept the name change, so [throat clearing] s-, you know, I say Fisher
22 Body. Then, at the union meeting Sunday when they said they were
23 gonna tear it down, that shocked me more than [throat clearing] anything
24 because here I just thought I was gonna stay in a couple'a more years.
25 Maybe I'll be ready then. I was just really amazed, so I've been tellin'
26 everybody and everybody go, like, 'I wanna see that,' and I say, 'I wanna
27 make sure I come down,' because – I said – I don't know. I think I might
28 actually cry because it's like I spent a lotta my life in here with people and
29 some of'm I'll see and some I won't because even the people I'm closest
30 to, we're gonna be splitted up goin' different places at the new plant but I
31 know I can call'm but it's not like – I used to see'm every day and that's
32 gonna be a big adjustment seein' different people every day after so many
33 years and wonderin' am I gonna click with them? You know? It's like I
34 wanna feel comfortable these next five years I'm gonna work and am I
35 gonna be comfortable with these new people who I don't know anything
36 about? You know, we don't like change and, and I know I don't like it. I
37 just wanna be with my old crowd and we could just work together again,
38 you know?
39
40Jerri Smith: Uh, Jerri Smith. [45:49] When talking about when you went into the plant
41 as a new hire or even later on, was there any pranks pulled on you?
42
43Beverly McKelvey: No, I, I have this attitude. I don't think anybody [laughter] would'a even
44 tried to pull one on me. The only problem I had when I hired in – and I
45 didn't know it was a problem with me. This one guy was, was pointin'
46 and talkin' one night, so I asked the glass guy next me, I says, "Is he

1 talkin' to you?" He said, "No, I think he's talkin' to you," so I said, "Are
2 you talkin' to me?" He go, 'Yeah, do your job right,' and I'm like, 'What
3 is he talkin' about? My job doesn't have anything to do with him, right?'
4 So – and I never said too much'a anything, so then I told him, I said, I –
5 which is bad to say – I called him a punk and this and that and the other
6 and I told him heck, he got his hair done where I got mines done at. I
7 know what he was and I'd come down there and I put my foot up his tail
8 to bring it out his mouth and this, that, the other and a-, and then e'rebody
9 around there got to lookin' at me like, whoa, she can talk, right? And that
10 was about the closest anybody – and I never had that problem after that.
11 [laughter] [throat clearing]
12
13 Jerri Smith: Um, [throat clearing] is there any other questions from anybody in the
14 group?
15
16 Doug Rademacher: [47:04] Well, yes. Beverly, you – did you have a chance to meet any of
17 the plant managers? I'm Doug Rademacher.
18
19 Beverly McKelvey: I don't think so. Matter of fact, I've never really want to meet any
20 management people. I – not that I dislike'm, it's just that once I went to a
21 meeting and that's when we had first started buildin' the new jobs, the
22 Olds and the Achieva and other, and we're at this meeting and he goes,
23 like, uh, we've gotta work together and our fortune tied together. I was,
24 oh yeah, I've got GM stock. I want my stock to stay up and he tells how
25 he was at a dealership and the door fit wasn't proper or somethin' and they
26 sold Nissans there and the door was fine and so I just asked him, I said,
27 "Why are you tellin' us this? I am a line worker. I can only do what you
28 give me to do and tell me how to do it, so if you have a problem with
29 anything else, then that's a management problem," so he looked at me
30 [laughter] like, uh, she's not on the same page with me [laughter], so I, I,
31 I've never cared too much 'cause I just feel this way. If you're gonna talk
32 to me about somethin', talk to me about somethin' that really I have some
33 control over. When it come to design of these jobs, the fit, the finish, I
34 have not control. When it gets to me, you say do it this way and I gotta,
35 you know, try to do it that way.
36
37 Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. [48:26] Uh, could you tell me about your experience
38 with the, the union? What do you think about the UAW? Did you have a
39 need for representation ever and, and have you, have you seen your
40 leadership change a number of times? What do you think about all that?
41
42 Beverly McKelvey: You know, I, I've had really good experience. I, I've had to have
43 committee call. I got a day off 'cause the little supervisor and I was havin'
44 a problem but I got paid for it after I showed'm the light and...
45
46 Male: After [inaudible 48:59]. [laughter]

1
2Beverly McKelvey: So, I, I've gotta admit, you know, I, I, I, uh, used to think, you know, I'm
3 payin' union dues for nothin' because, you know, you never get a union
4 call and you always feel like the troublemakers get all the perks, you
5 know. It takes bein' a troublemaker to get a union call like this, you
6 know, and they just seem to get all the things but after that, I say, yeah, I'd
7 rather work where there's a union than not. You know, I, you know, I
8 don't care what anybody say. Payin' union dues and havin' a union is the
9 best thing in the world.
10
11Jerri Smith: Mike Fleming.
12
13Mike Fleming: Bev, um, throughout your time – you've been here since 1979. [49:41]
14 What would you consider a, a benefit that the union has bargained for you,
15 the one that you appreciate the most?
16
17Beverly McKelvey: Well, now that I'm older, it's the healthcare because now I'm takin' like
18 three pills a day that I have to take every day and then I have three other
19 that I take when needed, so, I mean, I was, like, healthy until a couple
20 years ago and it's like now, it's like, every time I look around, I'm gettin'
21 another pill that I gotta take the rest of my life [coughing], so – and I look
22 at what I pay in that little slip they give you, how much it actually costs
23 and when you're gonna be on somethin' the rest of your life, I mean,
24 that's, it's, it's just I'm glad I've got some healthcare.
25
26Mike Fleming: You've got children and grandchildren.
27
28Beverly McKelvey: Right.
29
30Mike Fleming: [50:28] Um, have you had an opportunity to, to utilize the TAP, the tuition
31 assistance plan, through the [inaudible 50:34].
32
33Beverly McKelvey: Oh yes, I definitely – my daughter, she graduated from the U of M and we
34 used every dime of the TAP money for that. Oh yes, it was a godsend. I
35 mean, a lotta people say they hate goin' through all that paperwork and the
36 hassle but like I tell anybody, use it and I, you know, used my TAP funds.
37 I go to school and now I'm just takin' the free classes over at buildin' 66,
38 so I, I'm just, you know, use it – 'cause I figure if you don't use it, they
39 gonna look at it – that's something [coughing] we could cut. Nobody use
40 it, you know, so why not cut that out?
41
42Female: Mm-hm.
43
44Mike Fleming: Community. [51:15] What – are you active in anything within your
45 community?
46

1Beverly McKelvey: Well, I, um, I dr-, I volun-, I'm doin' community service at the cancer
2 society because I used to drive patients for them, so I call them when the
3 plant was gonna close down, so I'm out there, you know, five days a week
4 and I drive patients and I enjoy that 'cause I like meeting people who –
5 you know, they've got this – they don't even think it's a death sentence,
6 they just think they've got this illness, they can deal wit it, and when you
7 talk to people like that, you don't have any problems and when I see those
8 little kids there for treatment, you definitely don't have problems. I don't
9 care what aches and pains I've got. I don't have any problems.
10

11Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. Um, we've been called the capital of quality. [52:08] What
12 would you attribute that to?
13

14Beverly McKelvey: Well, I, I think people at Fisher Body actually care about what they were
15 doin'. You know, we might grumble and complain but I, I really do –
16 everybody really care about puttin' out a good car because your family
17 and friends and I have one friend, the only thing she will buy is a Grand
18 Am when they first started makin'm and she loves'm. I mean, that's the
19 only car she will buy and, you know, I – then I have – I hear other people
20 where I'm workin' at now who I would never buy a Lansing car, I would
21 never buy a American car, so I tell'm, like, this here, fine and dandy but
22 pretty soon when you keep sending your money overseas, you won't have
23 a job to even buy that but, uh, but I just think we all care 'cause I think we
24 take pride in workin' at Fisher Body. I mean, it's a livin' but I think you
25 also take pride in any place you work, especially when you, when you're
26 there as much as you're at home and you take pride in your home.
27

28Doug Rademacher: Doug Rademacher. [53:12] Beverly, did ya – do you ever sit back and
29 think about how many cars you've built since 1979 and do you ever
30 wonder where they all go?
31

32Beverly McKelvey: No, I, I think back and say, 'I don't believe I stayed here this long.'
33 [laughter] I, I've never thought about the number of cars we produced. I
34 guess because when I see'm as always just metal and I don't actually see
35 the colors and, and everything else, so to me, I, I guess I've never looked
36 at'm as bein' a car. To me, it's like a puzzle that's been put together and
37 I'm just lookin' at raw metal, so I never think that I'm the one who's
38 actually buildin' that nice color car going down through trim [laughter]
39 'cause I just feel like I – you know, the other people doin' all'a that work.
40

41Doug Rademacher: [throat clearing] Excuse me.
42

43Jerri Smith: Mike Fleming?
44

1 Doug Rademacher: I got one more, one more question, uh, Bev, about [throat clearing] your
2 union activities. [54:05] Do you participate in your, uh, local elections?
3 Do you vote within your local union and within your community?
4

5 Beverly McKelvey: Oh, definitely. I, I always get out and vote 'cause I like to make sure I
6 talk. Okay, I tell people if you don't go and vote, then don't complain.
7 Don't complain about anything. So, I make sure I vote and I can complain
8 about anything I want because I took the time to go vote and, you know,
9 and you hear those people complain about stuff and then I'll go like
10 [coughing] – like this one guy I work with, he was complainin', so I said,
11 "Well, did you go vote?" Well, no, I had to go get somethin' to eat! Well,
12 if you can run outta that shop and go to burger – drive to Burger King, you
13 could go to the union hall and vote. It's like I told him, don't complain
14 about nothin', so that's who I am about any election; local, state, city. I
15 get out and vote and then I can complain when the [inaudible 54:54]
16 person is in office 'cause at least I voted and tried to keep him out.
17

18 Doug Rademacher: Beverly, one more question from me. This is Doug Rademacher. You,
19 uh, you say you're from Alabama...
20

21 Beverly McKelvey: Mm-hm.
22

23 Doug Rademacher: ...and now you're – you've put in a full lifetime of commitment to
24 General Motors up here. [55:15] Do you ever think when you're done, will
25 you go back or do you – is Lansing your home now forever or what?
26

27 Beverly McKelvey: Well, Lansing's my home because where I'm from – Birmingham is a
28 large place. It's on the order of Detroit, so to me, Lansing is a really small
29 place, so [throat clearing] when I was home last – and it's like the traffic
30 and everything and I don't think I could deal with all that. To me, this –
31 Lansing's is this little bitty hick town and I can go this way and be, you
32 know, [laughter] this way and you're there 15 minutes. You know, if
33 you're in Birmingham, you wanna go shopping, I'm talkin', you gotta take
34 a ride and the highways and people are nuts when they drive, so I think I'll
35 just be in this little small town and I did have a lotta friends ask me that
36 when I was there last year, would I move back there and I said, "No, that's
37 just way too busy."
38

39 Jerri Smith: Jerri Smith. [56:09] Bev, is there anything that we haven't asked you
40 [throat clearing] that you would like to add to the interview?
41

42 Beverly McKelvey: No, I, I don't think so but I did enjoy workin' at the old plant, though. Did
43 someone ask me that? I did enjoy it, you know? I, you know, I enjoy
44 goin' in there 'cause, you know, you're gonna see your other family and
45 then I enjoyed leavin' [laughter] 'cause then we're gonna see the other
46 family [laughter], you know? But I did, I enjoyed my time.

1
2Jerri Smith: We'd like to thank you for your interview.
3
4Cheryl McQuaid: Thank you Bev.
5
6Mike Fleming: Thanks for comin' Bev.
7
8Beverly McKelvey: Okay.
9
10
11/ad