

Allan Pilver

JA: Allan, Thank you for meeting with me. Can you tell me where you call home?

AP: I am a Florida resident and I reside in the Hartford, Connecticut area from late spring to late summer.

JA: Where did you grow up?

AP: I was born and grew up in the Hartford area. The section of Hartford where I was raised and attended school included many Jewish and Christian families. There were many boys in the neighborhood with whom I enjoyed playing sports year-round. There was a park close by and I ice skated, sledged, and fished there. There were various ball fields there and we had sufficient boys around to frequently play any team sports.

JA: Are you married?

AP: Yes, Elaine and I have been married for 52 years.

JA: How did you meet?

AP: We met at a piano lounge in Hartford. My friend and I visited with two girls sitting in a booth. I subsequently dated one of the girls (she could not resist my charm) and we ended up married.

JA: Tell me about your family.

AP: We have two children. Dan lives in Bend, Oregon. He is a high school teacher for at-risk students and a true outdoorsman. Living in Bend allows him to have some serious outdoor adventures. He spent eight weeks in Africa this past summer. Our daughter, Susan, and her family live in Connecticut. She is a special education teacher, as well as an entrepreneur with her essential oils business, a life coach, a jewelry maker, and gardener. She has three children.

JA: Tell me about your parents and do you have any siblings

AP: My mother was born in Poland and was a stay-at-home mother, which of course was typical in those years. My father was born in the US and owned a grocery store and later a delicatessen. I have a younger brother, Mel, who lives in Connecticut.

My mother kept a kosher home. I was fortunate to have my maternal grandparents living in the same apartment building as us. They arrived in the United States in the early part of the 20th century with some of their children. They came from eastern Poland, where it was part of Russia prior to World War I. They were observant Jews and spoke Yiddish among the many family members and friends who came to visit them. I loved my grandmother's old country cooking. My paternal grandparents also lived nearby, and we visited with them as well. They came to the United States prior to World War I from Russia. My mother's and father's families came to America to escape the pogroms. We had many aunts, uncles and cousins who lived nearby and with whom we had frequent get-togethers.

JA: What is your education background and Elaine's?

AP: I attended public school, which I enjoyed very much. My brother and I went to Hebrew school at an orthodox synagogue, where we had our bar mitzvahs. After graduating high school, I attended the University of Connecticut, majoring in chemical engineering and received my bachelor's and master's degrees. I also did graduate studies in environmental engineering. Elaine has a math and accounting bachelor's degree and a master's degree in finance.

JA: After graduating from college, where did you work?

AP: My first position was at Pratt Whitney Aircraft, specializing in fuel cell technology. Pratt provided the fuel cells for NASA's Apollo program. I worked on the fuel cell program for NASA's Manned Orbiting Laboratory project. Thereafter, I worked at Combustion Engineering in their nuclear power systems division for 24 years. The company designed and manufactured the nuclear reactor systems which are used in large nuclear power plants. In the last stage of my career, I worked as an engineer for the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Air Bureau, where our function was to control and reduce air pollution.

JA: What was Elaine's occupation?

AP: She was a high school math teacher and the first female computer programmer at Hartford's Aetna Insurance company. She subsequently worked for many years in the Finance Department in the Connecticut Community College

system. In addition, Elaine served on the board of education in the town where our family resided.

JA: Let us talk about your retirement.

AP: I retired when I was 65 years old and moved to Naples about 12 years ago. Elaine and I appreciate the many opportunities that Naples offers. We belong to the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) which maintains natural preserves in Collier and Lee Counties offering hiking and wildlife viewing. We are members of the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary where we often walk on their 2+ mile boardwalk through the swamp. Other local organizations we belong to are the Naples Zoo and Naples Botanical Garden. We like the beautiful beaches here and attend events at Artis Naples.

JA: So, what is a typical day for you?

AP: I enjoy walking with Elaine in the morning, and lunch or dinner with friends. I read various books and articles, mostly nonfiction and often pertaining to political events. Occasionally I play golf and go fishing, but not nearly as frequently as in my younger years. Besides walking in the preserves that were previously mentioned, we like some of the parks in the area, e.g., Baker Park and Freedom Park. We have a fun time with our neighbors at our residential community pool. Last year my wife and I re-learned bridge at the Naples Bridge Center (NBC). So now we play with friends and sometimes at the NBC.

JA: You are one of the leaders of the MCA "Israel Discussion Group". Your knowledge of the history and current affairs of Israel is remarkable. You are a defender of Israel. How did this evolve?

AP: Many years ago, I observed how the media coverage of Israel was unfair and biased against Israel. I was also interested in understanding more about the bad treatment the Jews experienced over the centuries. So, I read to become more familiar with Israel's history and generally that of the Jews that occurred over the centuries. One of my engineering professors once told the class "You have to understand the problem in order to solve it." I am a member of several organizations that address various Jewish and Israel related matters such as: PRIMER (Promoting Responsibility In Middle East Reporting); CAMERA (Committee For Accuracy In Middle East Reporting And Analysis); ZOA (Zionist Organization of America); AIPAC; Freedom Center and others. PRIMER is a

Connecticut organization which I was formerly active in and which follows mainly the print media in that state and writes letters and opinion pieces in defense of Israel. We would also meet with newspaper news and opinion pages executives to point out bias.

JA: Other than the Israel Discussion Group, what other activities that MCA offers do you partake in?

AP: MCA is a great organization, offering so much. Now that I am an octogenarian and less apt to partake in some of the physical activities, it still provides opportunities to be engaged with others. I attend the monthly luncheon presentations; medical presentations and various trips that the MCA offers. For example, I very much enjoyed the visit to the Naples airport, the Christmas day walk and breakfast, and events at the Nina Iser Center. We plan to attend the Chanukah celebration again and the Carol King dinner show next year.

JA: Allan, I want to thank you for sharing your background with me. I am very impressed with your knowledge and interest of Israel, especially today when Israel is fighting an existential war. It is good to know that it has a strong supporter in you.