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Interviews of the Margaret MacVicar Memorial AMITA Oral History Project

Alice H. Kimball – Class of 1936

(interviewed by Eleni Digenis)

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MIT ALUMNAE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Alice H. Kimball
Pinehurst, West Hartland, CT

by Eleni Digenis
August 14, 1992

Transcribed by Eleni Digenis

Digenis: Today is Friday, August 14, 1992 and this is Eleni Digenis and I am interviewing Alice Kimball, a graduate of MIT Class of 1936. To start off, why don't you tell us where you were born and where you grew up?

Kimball: I was born in Boston and grew up in West Roxbury, a suburb of West Roxbury, and I went to elementary school out there and to Girls' Latin School in Boston before I went to MIT. My father, Frederick H. Hunter (MIT 1902), was a very active MIT alumnus and I just grew up knowing where it was. In fact, when I was in high school, my father took me and one of my classmates, Phyllis Needham, who eventually went to the Institute also, to the inauguration of Karl Compton as President. That was in 1930.

Digenis: So did your parents foster and influence in you an interest in science?

Kimball: I don't really know whether it was that. My mother, Helen Sewall Hunter, was a Latin and Greek teacher, but she had a very quick mind and she was faster than my father at mathematics quite frequently. She had been a teacher, a normal school graduate and teacher and then went on to college at the University of Missouri (1904) and taught in college. I think my father was more plodding and deliberate, but we always had math around. My father's business was (he was in business for himself) preparing what was called quantity surveys for people who perhaps could not read blueprints well enough to decide themselves how much plastering, painting, etc, was required. It was a tremendous amount of multiplying fractions. If you want to know I can multiply three and three-fourths by two and five-eighths by six and two-thirds. We used to

help him. One of my cousins wondered why he didn't use a calculating machine. Of course, they still were all hand, there weren't electric ones in those days. But you would have had to convert everything to decimals and all of the stuff we had was in fractions of an inch and things like this, or fractions of feet really. When it came to size of windows, it would be three and two-thirds feet by six and one-half or something of this kind. Boy, you learned to multiply fractions, let me tell you! I always had fun - definitely no math phobia. I really think if Applied Mathematics had been available, I would have been as interested in that as anything else.

Digenis: What subjects did they teach at the Girls' Latin School?

Kimball: Besides Latin and Greek?

Digenis: Yes.

Kimball: I had Latin and Greek and French. What they didn't teach were solid geometry, trigonometry, and physics. They were strictly college preparatory, but they taught only chemistry. I worked in the Chem Lab there my senior year helping get the stuff ready in the stock room and things of this kind. I had a lovely time. But, otherwise it was really rigorous training. There was no question about that. There were various things. In the eighth grade - that's fifth form - I had a course in English history. I can recite the Kings of England, but I can't recite the Presidents of the United States. Then we had all the usual (subjects). They did a good job on two years of algebra and plane geometry, but no solid, no trig.

Digenis: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Kimball: I am the oldest of three and neither of them were particularly scientifically inclined. My sister Elizabeth was a Fine Arts and Bible major in college at Western Reserve University, and my brother David did not graduate. He went for a while to Mass State, which is now UMass, but his health wasn't good and he was

usually happier doing outside work. He does do writing for some of the local papers and things of this kind. I think he enjoys that kind of thing and writes well. I know he was working for the Great Northern Railroad and was Secretary of the Union. I suspect he can write better than most other people. My family was very rigorous about grammar and language. It's very funny, my father from the time he was a little boy had decided he wanted to be an architect, and then after he had received two degrees from MIT, he thought maybe he wasn't cut out to be an architect. He was critical of a young man who didn't know what he wanted to do, not realizing that what he thought he wanted to do wasn't what he should have.

Well anyway, my parents were well along in years before they were married. Mother was two years older than my father and she was thirty-four and he was thirty-two. It was three years after they were married before I was born and I'm the oldest of the three. They were much more mature and had been around more than many of the parents of the people I knew.

We lived in West Roxbury and by the time I was getting through high school we were in the depths of the Depression. MIT at that point was extremely well heeled with scholarship aid for women. For financial reasons, I would have had to live at home. I think I preferred the idea of going there - I liked the subject matter - rather than going to Simmons or Radcliffe, which would have been the other possibilities, where there were dormitories and you still had to commute. Now one of my friends over here was a Simmons graduate who did commute most of the time. She finally did stay in the dorm one year. You were at a different level. Living at home I was just as well, if not better off, than the girls who lived in rooming houses and whatnot around Boston.

Digenis: Was it hard going from an all girls school to MIT which was mostly male?

Kimball: No. I didn't think it was hard. Nothing hard about it. In the first place, there were three of us in the freshman class the year I went who'd all been in high school together. There were four of us

(Phyllis Needham, Kathleen Shott, Miriam Wheeler) who were around a great deal together. In fact, three of us were in 5.01 and 8.01 lectures and they'd sit us squarely in the middle of the second row in 10-250. Boy you were conspicuous and they knew whether you were there or not! It was very embarrassing. It was much better when you got along to the place where you were the only woman student in the class. Then the men would talk to you. But, if you had company you were slightly isolated.

Digenis: That's interesting.

Kimball: Yes. There'd be some help in that. The other thing was that I had an awfully good time and didn't flunk out obviously. Socially, I think I really had a good time.

Digenis: What was it like socially?

Kimball: Well at that point, I don't know whether I counted up, but in the course of thirty weeks I probably went to twenty-five formal dances with, I shudder to think, how many different men! My father maintained that MIT men did nothing but dance! They had beautiful dances in Walker Memorial, almost every weekend. And some fraternity dances and I went around with some fraternity men, but mostly it was dorm.

Digenis: How was the work at MIT? The studying compared to high school?

Kimball: Well, it was duck soup! My high school preparation was so much better than many of the men students who came from small town high schools. It wasn't until I started taking things like Theoretical Physics that I really had to struggle and didn't do very well in. I took physics in summer school at MIT, entrance physics. My other two friends went to other high schools for a year after they got through Latin School to fill in those gaps. I had taken the trigonometry in a Saturday morning course at Teacher's College and I

passed the college board satisfactorily. But, as far as I was concerned I never felt really at home with trigonometry and that's what caused my problems in Theoretical Physics. The solid geometry I did by myself and took the college board. Everybody had problems with Freshman Physics when they started throwing the calculus at you when you hadn't had that in Calculus class yet. But, the other problem with Freshman Physics was the use of Greek letters (there was one other student in the class who'd had Greek). Boy, were we in demand to figure out the Greek letters! They'd throw half the Greek alphabet at you too! So, it made quite a difference that I'd had three years of Greek. Classical, needless to say.

Digenis: How did you decide on chemistry as your major?

Kimball: Well, the question came up would it be chemistry or general science? I decided that chemistry was a more specific and reliable sort of thing. I had always thought Helen Miller, to whom I looked up, had been in general science, but she wasn't. There was a feeling that general science and general engineering was for those who couldn't make up their minds.

Digenis: What was general science?

Kimball: Well, I'd have to get out some of the catalogs which I don't have from those days, but it was a smattering. You probably could throw some biology in there too, which in the chemistry curriculum you didn't have. After all, the courses were pretty specifically prescribed in those days. You didn't have too much place for electives. If you were going to get a degree in chemistry the courses you were to take were pretty well defined.

Digenis: You had mentioned about your interest in architecture and about your father's comment on architecture for women.

Kimball: Well, I just a few days ago I made a comment to somebody and she said, "Oh! You know something about architecture?" And I said, "Sure. I'm a frustrated architect. I always wanted to be one." My father felt that this was not a field for a woman because large firms would not - and remember this was before World War II - employ a woman in a drafting room with a lot of young men and that's where you started out. He thought that it was no field for a woman because if you did finally do it and go into practice they'd only go to you for house planning and there was no money in that. He didn't know about chemistry. Actually, chemistry was probably a better background if you were going to teach.

Digenis: Could you have done anything other than teach with a chemistry degree when you graduated?

Kimball: At that point, I think you would have wanted to go on. We did discuss the fact that - after we had several children, discussing life insurance and one thing and another - if anything happened to my husband (George Elbert Kimball), and I was going to have to support the children, that I should probably go to a place like Columbia Teacher's College and get a doctorate in chemistry or science. In those positions, teaching had the same kind of schedule as your children which was a great help. Of course, it finally got to the point we didn't all have the same schedule anyway because Columbia's spring vacation was never the same as the kids.

Digenis: Was it easy for women who were scientists, in the time you graduated - could they have a career as a research scientist or... - what was open to them in terms of jobs?

Kimball: Well, in the depths of the Depression I don't think much. But, the thing was that I was planning to get married, and so I proceeded to look at - and I'd always said I didn't want to teach, ha, ha, ha... - several schools, and it would have to be private school, because the public schools you'd have to fulfill the requirements for a teaching certificate, things of that sort. So, I went to a good many

private schools in New York City and was interviewed and looked them over. They were all rock-bottom. I mean the pay was gorgeous - like fifty dollars a month. Riverdale (Riverdale Country School for Girls, New York, NY), where I taught, it was fifty dollars a month, but you could have board and room if you'd wanted it.

Digenis: They throw that in...

Kimball: Yes. The boys school was a boarding school and many of the teachers lived in the dorm. Needless to say, since I was married and living just a half mile from the school in Riverdale - George would use the subway to commute to Columbia - I did without free room and board thank you.

Digenis: When did you get married?

Kimball: Right after graduation.

Digenis: Was your husband from MIT?

Kimball: No. I met him there. My husband, received all his degrees - Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD - from Princeton, in chemistry. But he was a National Research Fellow at MIT working with Professor Slater in the Physics Department. I don't know when I met him. I haven't the vaguest idea. The matron in the Margaret Cheney Room - and I wish I could remember her name - was asked by Dr. Compton to arrange to have tea served every afternoon in the Eastman Building so that the graduate students and faculty could come in and sit and have a cup of tea and talk. So, I made the tea and ate all the broken cookies and for years after that I couldn't face a cookie. But, this is where I met most of the graduate students and faculty both in chemistry and physics because they were the people who came around on the third floor there. As you go through now there's a barrier, so you can't walk through there. So that was how I met a lot of people.

Digenis: How many years did you teach at the Riverdale school?

Kimball: Well, basically three because then we started a family. Then there were all the years that I worked with my husband on a part-time basis. I would have died during the war if I hadn't had something of that sort to do. He was gone helping the Navy look for submarines. I was really grateful that I had usually not more than half-time work, but that kept me sane if nothing else and it was very interesting. The people at Columbia with whom I worked - (Harold C. Urey, Maria G. Mayer, Willard F. Libby) - were on what eventually became the Manhattan project, and there were many others who came, so that I don't know how many Nobel Prize winners are among good friends, but there were quite a few.

Digenis: So, during the war your husband was away a lot of the time?

Kimball: He was away most of the time. He'd come home Saturday night and Sunday morning we'd do his laundry and he'd go off again Sunday night on a sleeper to Washington. He was in and out of there, looking for submarines and also helping plan landing operations. The field, which is now quite common, called Operations Research was brand-new in those days.

Digenis: How old were your children at that time?

Kimball: Well, the first was born in December of 1940 and one in '42, one in '44 and the youngest one was born after the war in '47.

Digenis: Was it very difficult raising them - with a baby, working part-time, your husband away...

Kimball: Well, no. I wouldn't say it was any more difficult than anything else. It was the third child that I was pregnant with - I was pregnant with Tom when I started working with Harold Urey. There's no reason why you can't work at that time. The children,

Prudence, Thomas, Susanna, and Martha were young enough, and I had good help that didn't cost a fortune. They would come at eight am and stay til you got home at six o'clock at night.

Digenis: Who was Harold Urey?

Kimball: Harold Urey was the chemist who won the Nobel Prize for the discovery of heavy hydrogen. He was in the Chemistry Department at Columbia and also lived right near us in Leonia, N.J.. His oldest daughter was my chief baby-sitter in evenings. She's now Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Pittsburg (Elizabeth Urey Barenger).

Digenis: What kind of work did you do with heavy hydrogen?

Kimball: Well just putting together a bibliography and then just combing - you see, no computers - chem abstracts, line by line by line. It had to be all the chemistry and the physics and the biology because in 1932 when Urey announced the discovery of heavy hydrogen, everybody went looking for it in every body of water around the world. Whether it was Lake Bacal or an Arctic river. So that there was a great deal of stuff and he wanted it all and it all got put in there. Then there came finding out; after you have all the references what's in the articles.

Fortunately, I had a young woman who worked with me some, who didn't have very much knowledge of chemistry, but she could read Russian. In the Japanese, there was always an English abstract in the front so that you could tell, and I was amazed that with what I had done we could manage the French, the German, the Spanish, the Italian. She and I went to a great many places. Almost every journal was available between New Haven and Princeton, and the New York City area. In places like the Museum of Natural History... One of the toughest libraries was the New York Medical Society. They'd only let you have three books at a time and when you wanted to look at a whole string you had to return those before you got three more. I learned a lot about libraries in the course of that and by this time I

had also taken German at MIT, you see, so that it was a great help. It's amazing what you can do, particularly when you're looking at tables and diagrams and that helps considerably.

Digenis: Was the work you were doing at that time classified because of the Manhattan project and the war?

Kimball: Well, there was no such thing as classification. (I had to apply for FBI Clearance in February, 1942.) When I started in, Harold Urey didn't want anyone to know what I was doing. I didn't work in the chemistry library at Columbia. One of the members of the Chemistry Department up on the eighth floor had a complete library of Chem Abstracts. He had them in the laboratory attached to his office and I sat there in silence and pouring through those things from 1932 on. By this time you got up to 1940, so there were of course a tremendous number of references in that period.

Digenis: How did the people - I'm sure you knew some of the people working on the Manhattan project and research on the heavy hydrogen - how did they feel when they found out about the hydrogen bomb, the destructive power of nuclear weapons?

Kimball: Well, of course at that point we were wondering whether it would work. I didn't know that much about it. I commented after it came out and they were calling it the atomic bomb. I said, "I didn't know that's what it was going to be called." And my husband said to me, "If you had been a science-fiction reader you'd know what it was going to be called." Well, at that point, some of those people who worked on it, Enrico Fermi, Maria Mayer, who was a very close friend of mine, they all expected great things were going to happen of this. I suppose to a certain extent some of those things have happened, but the negatives have been so terrible that it's hard to know. They aren't any of them living now.

Digenis: How did you feel about it?

Kimball: I didn't know enough in real details to know. It sounded as if everything was going to be nuclear chemistry and physics from there on in. Of course, it hasn't turned out to be at all.

Digenis: After this work you worked with your husband?

Kimball: I had started before I did this. I was around the lab often two or three days a week at Columbia doing an assortment of things. My husband was a theoretical chemist so there was plenty of work on the calculator, and one thing or another, and I'd follow this through. In fact, we had our own calculator at home, as well as the ones in the lab. Furthermore, the University wasn't very good with supporting services. He found that the kind of typing that needed to go into his papers, an average standard secretary would have a great deal of trouble doing. So I did a great deal of that. He'd never had drafting and I had as a freshman, so I would do the drawings and illustrations for his papers. So, I'd say I was the Girl-Friday. Only on Monday or Wednesday.

Digenis: After you finished the work there you moved to Boston?

Kimball: Well, my husband taught at Columbia for twenty years, except that he was on leave from July 1942 to January 1946. But otherwise he was there. So, for the next ten years after the war we were still at Columbia. But, he had been doing consulting with Arthur D. Little on the side and with the military as an off-shoot of what he had done during the war. I think Arthur D. Little went in for commercial development of Operations Research. George was interested in this and he finally felt he could accomplish more working on that, which was a new field, full-time. So, in 1956 we moved to Winchester, Massachusetts.

Digenis: I was aware that you were on a number of volunteer organizations.

Kimball: I was active in Girl Scouts and in church, and as a result I served for four years as continental President of the Unitarian Universalists Women's Federation. I served for six years as President of the Massachusetts Girl Scouts, which was a business operation and I was also for many years a Girl Scout leader. With three daughters it's not surprising. I was busy. Talking about math, I was the auditor of the League of Women Voters in Winchester for several years. The treasurer was somebody I knew well and I enjoyed doing that. So there were a lot of things and I was very busy.

We used to talk about what I might do - my husband was eight years older than I, and his health was obviously deteriorating and my family much longer lived than his, so it was obvious that I would probably be left a widow, barring an accident or something. His comment at that time was, "You probably want to get a job to have something to do." But, by the time I was left alone, it was when I did a major hunk of this work. Of course, if you're President of a continental organization, you travel. I went all over the country in the United States and parts of Canada, too. I enjoyed it, but I wouldn't want to do it now. I decided to live out here full time (in West Hartland, CT). We used to spend summers here when the children were little because my husband could do his consulting here as well as anywhere else. So, we would be here all summer and I knew it's where everybody wants to come to visit, as you can see.

Digenis: Yes, I can see why.

Kimball: But I have really been a full-time resident here since 1972. Although, I made this my legal residence in 1969. I have become involved in local affairs here and I chair both the Wetlands Commission and the Board of Tax Review. I have taken the necessary training to be a certified election moderator and I moderate town meetings as well. This will be my last two years on the Board of Tax Review because under state statute the work all has to be done in February and when you live here the idea of evening meetings in February leaves something to be desired. Particularly when they

have to be held because you've advertised them in the paper. East Hartland is where the center of town is, so it's ten miles from here. And I don't like the night driving and bad weather and I'd just as soon not do anything that required my being away.

Digenis: I know that you're interested in camping and sailing, can you tell any adventures with the Girl Scouts or on your own?

Kimball: We did a lot of adventures with the Girl Scouts. I grew up in a camping family, both canoe camping on the Charles river and backpacking in the White Mountains. My parents had spent their honeymoon camping in the White Mountains in 1911. So, I really liked it. I had taken the Girl Scouts camping training and my middle daughter Susanna one time - when we hadn't been in Winchester too long, she was in Junior High - she said that rather than go to church camp for a couple weeks in the summer, she would like to spend the money getting camping equipment so we could go camping. I took the two younger girls - Martha was still in elementary school - and we spent a week camping on our own private island on Lake George in New York. It really made you aware of your responsibilities when you're on an island with two little girls. It was a really interesting experience. As far as I was concerned having this place (a lake-front home in West Hartland, CT) you had to go someplace that was really interesting if you were going to do it. At that point, there was no place on Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard that you could go and this was the kind of thing we were looking at. Your own island on Lake George worked pretty well. After that, with the Girl Scouts we did a lot of camping.

My oldest daughter Prudence graduated from Brown, was heading for graduate school at the University of Washington and it was the year of the Seattle Fair. We decided that (a friend of mine with whom I'd been active in the Girl Scouts, I'd gone camping with her troops and she'd gone camping with mine) Prudy had to be driven to Seattle and we'd camp our way cross country on the Trans-Canada highway. It was the first year it was open. So we did, and back again in September. That was the first cross country camping trip

that I'd made, but I've done about six or seven cross country trips since then. I'd have to go back and look at my pictures to figure it out. And I've enjoyed it very much indeed. This last trip, last fall, I drove 10,500 miles. I didn't go out of the country. I drove across Montana and northern Idaho into Washington and came back through Texas. I'd like to do it again, but I can't quite see my daughter letting me put that much mileage on her vehicle.

At this point it was kind of a joke because when she said I could do it she also said (I have a sister in Los Angeles) wouldn't I like to visit my sister for two weeks while she and her friend flew out and took the van down to Baja California. Which they did. So the joke was that mother drove it cross country so it would be there for them to use. On some of my trips, my youngest daughter Martha would arrange to meet me for her vacation by flying to Phoenix or El Paso or somewhere, and then spending her two week vacation and end by flying home, because I'd be there with the equipment and I could drive home. The first time we rode mules to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and went to Bryce and Zion which we hadn't done. Another time, she flew out and we went down to Big Bend National Park together. She and I have been to Big Bend twice and that is so far from anywhere that it becomes quite a camping trip.

Digenis: Where is Big Bend?

Kimball: It's the big bend in the Rio Grande river in Texas. That bump. You're coming down from El Paso and it comes down like this and Big Bend is just down in that area. It's a very interesting place, but it's a long day's drive from El Paso. One time we drove all the way. Then we had a friend - a MIT professor actually (Philip M. Morse) - who found out that my daughter and I were going on a raft trip in Utah and he wanted to know if he could come too and he did. After that for several years we went out wandering in Utah in May. But, I don't like to be away from here in May. But we took the jeep trip, the raft trip and I've been through the Grand Canyon on a raft.

Digenis: Really!

Kimball: Yes. So I have put on a program on the Canyon and my friend and I walked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. She was teaching school in Buffalo and she flew out to Phoenix and we walked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and spent a couple of days there and back. Then she eventually flew home from Albuquerque, covering all the sites in between. Another neighbor and I spent the month of September going to Rocky Mountain National Park, Mesa Verde, Carlsbad and Big Bend and driving back. In other words, four National Parks.

Digenis: You put in a lot of mileage.

Kimball: Yes. I manage to put mileage on cars. This car has been across the country twice, but it's getting a little elderly to go across again. I'll drive it up to Maine, but that's about it. I really have enjoyed it, but I must admit that now I would not have the physical strength to do a lot of the heavy setting camp up and down.

Digenis: Are you still volunteering with the Hartland Wetlands Commission?

Kimball: Yes, I'm chairman of the Wetlands Commission right now and the Board of Tax Review, I'm chairman too - chair if you want to be non-sexist. I have a feeling I'll be working the polls for the primary in September. Election Moderator is the person who's in charge of swearing everybody in and making sure the machines are all in order and everything is legal. There are several of us in town who are qualified to do that. The Republican and Democratic Registrars of Voters are the ones who take turns getting a Republican or a Democrat. They are pretty careful not to stack the polls one way or another.

On the case of moderating town meetings, that's a different kettle of fish. For several years I told the First Selectman that he should not be moderating the town meeting. He wasn't a very good Moderator, but I didn't tell him that. For the simple reason that the

First Selectman is the one who needs to answer all the questions and the Moderator should not be involved in the business. Well, the current First Selectman is somebody I know well, and I think he's now educated to the point that came up at the last town meeting and said, "The chair will entertain the motion to appoint Alice Kimball Moderator. In fact, I even know she has her gavel in her handbag." I explained that it was a perfectly legitimate thing. You can ask for other nominations, but you can direct to entertain a nomination. I think there are other people in town who could do the job every bit as well, but most of them have axes they want to grind or things they want to say, and I'm more concerned about the process and making sure it goes smoothly and people have a chance to get their say. I'm not het up lots of times over the outcome if the process has been good.

Digenis: Were you President of AMITA (Association of MIT Alumnae) when you were in Winchester?

Kimball: I was President of AMITA, yes.

Digenis: What kind of work did you do with the Alumni Association? Was MIT different from the way it had been when you were a student there?

Kimball: Well, yes. A couple of times we had some run-ins with the administration. There evidently was a time when they threatened to eliminate women students all together.

Digenis: Really! When was this?

Kimball: Somewhere in the late 50's. They were thinking that this business of suitable housing - I don't know whether I want it on tape or not, but maybe I will tell you. My eldest daughter, who went to Pembroke (then the women's college at Brown University), majored in Chemistry and was ready to go to the University of Washington to graduate school. When we lived in Winchester, she applied to MIT

and they told her that even if she was accepted, she would have to live at home because they didn't have adequate living for women students. They had a small Freshman House and that was it. Well, here she is having graduated from Brown, ready to go to graduate school, and we were having an AMITA meeting and Mrs. McCormick came and several people were sounding off about the inadequacies of housing for women students. The Institute had been trying to get Mrs. McCormick's money for some time and shortly thereafter she said she would give money for a dormitory for women and it must be on campus. As it was going up, we said, "That's the building that got built because Prudy went to Pembroke." That was the first step.

Of course, things have changed a great deal now as far as housing and when you have - what thirty percent of the students at MIT are women now, whereas one percent then. Actually, there may have been more than one percent, but certainly when we graduated that was about right. There were about five Bachelor's degrees in a class of 527 or something like that. Two Masters and one PhD given to women that year.

Digenis: If Mrs. McCormick hadn't stepped up at that time, were they seriously considering not allowing female students at MIT?

Kimball: This time it's later you see. Prudy graduated from Brown in 1962. So, we were talking about sometime later, but yes I think so. So bless Mrs. McCormick. Do you know the story of the painting of Mrs. McCormick in the red gown that hangs in McCormick Hall?

Well, they wanted a portrait of Mrs. McCormick, but she said she was too old to have her portrait painted. It wouldn't be good. But, she did have one that had been done of her as a young woman. They got it out of storage and she decided that the drapery was a little too low and they sent it off and had the neckline filled in. If you look at it carefully, you can see! So, when it came back, the man who was uncrating it - they asked him what he thought, and he said, "I liked it better before!" If you are some time in McCormick Hall look - I think it's in the West of the two sitting rooms. There is a

painting with the red gown and you can go up and look and you can see that it's been added on to!

Digenis: I'll have to go and look for it when I'm back on campus.

Kimball: Yes. I was talking to somebody the other day and I said that I wasn't running the trustees of the church anymore, but I was busy running - not running the town, that's for sure - but involved in town affairs. I find it nice. I've never lived in a small town. This is a real small one.

(BEGIN SIDE TWO OF TAPE)

Kimball: I served one term as President of AMITA, but I think there were people who felt that it would be more appropriate to have someone who was professionally involved at that time, which I wasn't. I'm planning to go up to the Institute in September for the Alumni Conference. Often AMITA has a dinner meeting after that is over on Saturday. Whether they are this year or not I don't know, but I'll make the hotel reservations. Most of the time I've figured I had to get home, but this time I figured I'd stay two nights at the Marriott, the one in Kendall Square, and see how the other half lives because that's not ordinarily my speed at all.

Digenis: Do you still see any of the women that you went to MIT with?

Kimball: Basically, no because my closest friend has died and the other woman (Kathleen Shott Cummins) who did come to our 50th reunion lives down in Bowie, Maryland. I have some funny experiences. My sister and I were at UCLA last fall for a dinner before a medal presentation, and we got to talking with one of the women who's on the staff. She said she had gone to Girls' Latin School and my sister and I said, "Well, we had too." Then she said she wanted to go to MIT, but her father wouldn't let her. So, we had quite an interesting discussion. And then I guess a lot of people face

this. Now this was a woman who was twenty-five years younger than I, but there were still many people who didn't like the idea and were set against it. I thought that was kind of amusing, all this taking place in Los Angeles.

To me, I guess, I've not had a huge career assorted, but I think my education has been well used along the line. I might say three of my four children ended up being chemistry majors in college. Not that their parents pushed them, but definitely in their minds that's the direction in which things went. Prudy went to Brown, Tom went to Case and Martha went to Carnegie Tech. So we obviously as a family had a bent in this direction. The last one, the middle daughter Susanna, was a psychology major at Lawrence College in Wisconsin. Not the odd ball in the family at all, that's not the right word, but her interest was a little less mathematical and scientific than the others and more people oriented. Very definitely. I would feel that definitely my education has been put to good use. One of the most satisfying things was that in the years that I was working in town and group work, you are respected by some of the most chauvinistic males if you have a MIT degree.

Digenis: The advantage.

Kimball: It is! There's no question about it. You could be every bit as bright and have gone to Smith, Wellesley or Mount Holyoke and it wouldn't have the same effect. Period. Amen.

(END OF INTERVIEW)