

**A TRIBUTE**

to

**JOY CORNING**

by

Maggie Tinsman

Iowa Women's Archives  
The University of Iowa Libraries  
Iowa City, Iowa

Hard Won, Not Done Oral History Project  
Tribute to Joy Corning by Maggie Tinsman

The University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Copyright 2023 by The University of Iowa

All rights reserved

No part of this interview, whether text, audio, or other format, may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Iowa Women's Archives  
The University of Iowa Libraries  
Iowa City, Iowa

Hard Won, Not Done Oral History Project  
Tribute to Joy Corning by Maggie Tinsman

This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed conversation. Please bear in mind that this is a text of the spoken rather than the written word. Repetitions, placeholder words, unfinished sentence fragments, or ungrammatical language have been edited only where necessary for clarity in the written text.

- Maggie Tinsman 00:00 Joy Corning was born in Bridgewater, Iowa, graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education and started her career as a school teacher in Glenwood in Waterloo, Iowa. She married Burt Corning in June, 1955, lived in Cedar Falls and had three wonderful daughters: Carol, Claudia and Anne. She quickly became involved with community organizations then and continued her whole life to be passionate about issues related to children and families, women's health and rights, equality and justice, education and the arts.
- Maggie Tinsman 00:44 A few of these organizations include the Des Moines Symphony and Foundation Board of Directors, Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa and the Heartland Board of Directors, Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC and Foundation Board of Trustees, The University of Northern Iowa's 100,000 Student First Campaign co-chair and 50-50 in 2020 Board of Directors. In fact, Joy has chaired and co-chaired many fundraising efforts.
- Maggie Tinsman 01:19 In 1973, Joy was elected to the Cedar Falls Board of Education and served as president of the board for nine years. In 1985, Joy was elected to the Iowa Senate and served for six years. And in 1991, she joined Governor Branstad as Lieutenant Governor and served for eight years. As Lieutenant Governor, she served as chair of the National Conference of Lieutenant Governors from 1996 to 97. Joy was always someone who showed respect for all Iowans, Democrats as well as fellow Republicans. Her openness was a precious and treasured gift.
- Maggie Tinsman 02:04 As Jean Lloyd-Jones said, and I quote, "Joy demonstrated integrity, perseverance, "and a concern for common good." She also teamed up with Democratic former Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson to found and co-chair Justice, Not Politics during the 2010 judicial retention elections on behalf of an independent judiciary. Joy was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 2004 as a major supporter of gender equity and into the Des Moines Business Records' Sages Over 70 in 2013.

- Maggie Tinsman 02:48 When Joy Corning passed away, Governor Branstad said, and I quote, "Joy was a very dedicated mother and grandmother and excellent role model. She was an outstanding, unflappable leader who treated everyone with the respect and dignity they deserved."
- Maggie Tinsman 3:07 Lieutenant Governor Reynolds stated, and I quote, "Joy Corning was a tremendous mentor and role model for me personally, as well as to so many other women. I treasured the time we got together and the guidance and encouragement she gave me."
- Maggie Tinsman 3:26 And former Chief of Staff, David Oman, mentioned, quote, "Joy Corning defined and demonstrated character always. To say she will be missed is a given. And so is the need for more leaders like her."
- Maggie Tinsman 3:44 It was my great pleasure to work with Joy, most recently as a founding member of the Board of Directors of 50-50 in 2020. She really was dedicated to putting more women in political office of the Iowa legislature, Iowa congressional delegation and the governor's office, but she became a dear friend of mine and mentor many years ago, even before we both served in the Iowa Senate together. I often stayed with her when I came to Des Moines from the Quad Cities. She was the kind of person we all aspire to be: bright, wise, happy and totally involved in her community. She was a phenomenal Iowa leader for quality education, children, civility, women and the Des Moines Symphony. Joy Corning will be forever honored and remembered by Iowa throughout the generations as an exceptional Iowa woman.