

**Interviewee:** Susan Schneider

**Interviewer:** Sydney Jackson, Grace Yoo

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### **Biography:**

Susan was born in San Francisco in 1948. Her mother died when she was six years old, and her and her brother were raised by my father, an immigrant from Eastern Europe. She was educated in the public school system in San Francisco. She went to City College of San Francisco from 1966 until 1968, majoring in Sociology and Psychology where she tutored young students in the housing projects of the Western Addition and worked with people with disabilities through the YMCA. She then transferred to SFSU in 1968 where she was heavily involved with the strikes. Today, Susan continues her work as a Social Worker and believes in building community. Her experience at San Francisco State “gave [her] the bricks to keep building and to remain committed to social justice, civil rights, and the truth.”

### **Abstract:**

(00:00:03-00:04:43) Born in San Francisco in 1948, Susan Schneider’s class consciousness developed when transferred to San Francisco State University from City College. (00:04:43-00:10:13) Schneider was first struck by the injustices in her community through an article written about child death from lead paint poisoning, making her determined to fix some of the systems around her. (00:15:03-00:20:21) Schneider began her involvement with the strikes through campus organizations, within the Social Work department, and through the United Farm Workers Union. (00:20:21-00:25:00/(00:25:00-00:30:08)) With a lifetime dedicated to work within community organizations and social work departments of San Francisco, Schneider offers a unique perspective as a student who was arrested and forced to testify. (00:35:53-00:39:52) This influenced her critiques on neoliberalism and capitalism within the institution Schneider’s work evolved into Public Health and she began focusing her time on the injustices within the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. (00:39:52-00:46:52) For Schneider the strike brought a new synthesis of community and what freedom could look like outside of the institution.



(00:00:03-00:04:43) **Susan Schneider:** My name is Susan Schneider

**Grace Yoo:** Okay, before we get started today is November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 and we're here in the Ethnic Studies building.

**Susan:** Okay

**Grace Yoo:** Great. So, Susan can you tell us when and where did you grow up?

**Susan Schneider:** I grew up in San Francisco. Not too far from here, I was out by the beach. Was born in San Francisco and educated in San Francisco. There was a brief period of time that we, very brief, that we lived in San Mateo. My parents went on their honeymoon in San Mateo when it took all day to drive there from San Francisco on the old Bayshore. And they decided that they were going to move there. And my father built a house. It took 10 years to do it, they collected materials and bricks and the whole things and he and his brothers built this house in San Mateo. Sadly, my mother got sick and she needed care at Stanford Hospital. Which at that time was in San Francisco. By the old, the CPMC building there's the Stanford building and that was Stanford Hospital. They moved back to San Francisco when I was 6, but she passed away. And then from that time on, my father raised my brother and I went to school here.

**Grace Yoo:** Okay. What neighborhood were you in San Francisco?

**Susan Schneider:** Down by the beach, not necessarily the Sunset, it was by I guess Lucky Market is down there now.

**Grace Yoo:** Oh, yeah. Now, as a kid, what did you do in your free time?

**Susan Schneider:** It was kind of different being raised by my father who had to work. He would want dinner ready. [laughing] "Dinner had to be ready when I get home from work." He would go to the butcher, buy some meat and the butcher's wife was kind enough to write down how to do certain things. SO, I would do it, however, I wanted to play outside with my friends. I wanted to go. Roast beef, you put it on, blah blah blah. So, I learned to put it on broil, so when my father came home, he would think it was done. He would cut into it and of course it would be raw in the middle. But at that time, there were family cafeterias in Westlake and Sonestown. You could go and get food. It was great and you did have to sit. It wasn't like a restaurant; it was like a cafeteria.

**Grace Yoo:** When were you born? What year?

**Susan Schneider:** 1948.

**Grace Yoo:** 1948. Okay. Did you have siblings too?

**Susan Schneider:** I had a brother, yes.

**Grace Yoo:** What high school did you go to in San Francisco?

**Susan Schneider:** I went to Lowell High School. It was close to where I grew up. At that point, you had to test to get in, but because my circumstances growing up were different, my father went to the school and said, "Please let my daughter in," so that's where I went.

**Grace Yoo:** Why did you choose San Francisco State?

**Susan Schneider:** Combination. I think growing up and seeing what was going on, there was so many changes going on in the world. Like with Vietnam and with the Black Panthers and the recent assassinations. I had applied to other schools. Being at Lowell, my other student friends were applying everywhere so I thought, "Well, I'll do that too" But truly, I'm a San Francisco kid. It represented everybody that I believe in.

**Grace Yoo:** What was your major at San Francisco State?

(00:04:43-00:10:13) **Susan Schneider:** Well, I started at city for a couple of years. I started at city and I took a lot of sociology classes and psychology classes and I did the same when I came here. But then, really wanted to focus on social work because the jobs that I had tutoring kids and working in, it was called the Cross-Cultural Family Center and one of the housing projects which of course got torn down during the dismantling of the Western Edition. But I wanted to do that. I wanted to be a social worker. I went to the library here and I read an article that Pat Purcell had written and he was the head of the Social Work department here. It was about kids who were suffering from being exposed to lead paint in their housing projects and brain damage and learning disabilities, etc. I walked into the department and said, "I wanna know more." And got to know him and that's when I focused.

**Grace Yoo:** Wow. What activities on campus were you involved in?

**Susan Schneider:** I was pretty involved with my department. I went to a lot of student meetings and I did some more tutoring, but truly the activities were getting to know other students. Being very social, I had been involved with being a child of the 60s and had a lot of fun. Went to a lot of concerts. My big claim to fame at that time is that Janice, I shared a cigarette with Janice Joplin. [laughing] She came up to me, I was smoking, and she had a cigarette and she didn't even talk. She just sort of went [gestures], so I had to hand her my cigarette. So, that was my big thing.

**Grace Yoo:** What year was that?

**Susan Schneider:** The first time I saw her sing was at city college. They just showed up, Big Brother and the Holding Company showed up, so in the late 60s.

**Grace Yoo:** And what year were you here at SF State?

**Susan Schneider** 68'

**Grace Yoo:** Oh, 68'

**Susan Schneider:** I started in 68'

**Grace Yoo:** Literally, you started the fall of 68' and the strike started November 6<sup>th</sup>

**Susan Schneider:** Yes, I started and it just made so much sense because what I had seen in the different jobs I had is. that there really needed to be change. I worked for a brief period in a gym, a for-profit gym in Sonestown. I think Jackle Lane. It was after a famous person, it was either Jackle Lane or Vic Tanny, I don't know. I was put in a room with other young women with phone books because it was pre-computer and I was assigned one letter of the alphabet, had to go down and call people and invite them to join this gym at a special introductory price. But, if they had an Asian name or Hispanic name or if they sounded like they were having trouble with English or it sounded not white, we would say, "Oh, sorry. Wrong number." and go on to the next thing. I walked out after, during my lunch break, it was the end of my job. I couldn't take it. So, coming to State and seeing what was going on and students getting together and really talking about the strike that was happening and people gathering, it just was making more and more sense. The activities I had were following what I believed in.

**Grace Yoo:** You were developing a consciousness.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah.

**Grace Yoo:** You just saw all the [inaudible]

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, yeah.

**Grace Yoo:** Wow. So, you're at SF State. Where were you November 6<sup>th</sup> when it started? The strike. When and at what point did you join the strike?

**Susan Schneider:** Immediately. When I started, when people were gathering and when I saw people getting beaten and arrested on campus, I couldn't figure out what was going on. And then there were speakers, but it wasn't just students, it was people from the community. Cecil Williams would come and talk and Carlton Goodlet would talk and Willie Brown as a young man came and they were all really making sense. It was just watching what was going on and I needed to be part of it.

(00:10:13-00:15:03) **Grace Yoo:** Yeah.

**Susan Schneider:** Then the picket lines were starting and it wasn't just students, it was also faculty who really believed in what was going on, really believed. Not all departments, like the business department, wasn't part of it and there was a time that we all went to where the business classes were and demanding them to go on strike as well and to join strike and going to the administration building. There were more and more community people. There was guerilla theater coming and the mime troop and it was just pretty incredible. There was one time when we started forming picket lines, there was this older woman who came, and I don't know if you know what the old laundry baskets looked like, the wicker baskets. She showed up, we were all freezing on the picket line and she showed up with a laundry basket and it was filled with baked potatoes.

**Grace Yoo:** Oh, my goodness.

**Susan Schneider:** She just wanted us all to have a hot potato. It was so generous. It was so loving it. It was great.

**Grace Yoo:** But that was kind of the energy. People were coming around to support everyone striking and would come and bring food.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, it was really wonderful. It was really wonderful.

**Grace Yoo:** We were wondering about, I was wondering about what food was like during the strike, but it sounds like people would bring food.

**Susan Schneider:** They did. They did and it was people from the community who really believed in what we were doing. It was so meaningful and then we were meeting each other, other students were meeting each other daily. People on the picket line and then going to rallies, but the arrests were continuing and it was becoming, all of a sudden there were police on horseback

that were there. They were very threatening. Very, very threatening. I think Hayakawa incited violence. I blame him for so much of what happened.

**Grace Yoo:** Do you remember...so you were on the picket line. Would you be here every day and how early were you here?

**Susan Schneider:** Yes. Well, I came in the morning. I really can't say what time exactly, but I would come daily at 19<sup>th</sup> and then there would be a rally around noon and the speakers were very inspirational and made a lot of sense.

**Grace Yoo:** And it went on for five months.

**Susan Schneider:** Yes.

**Grace Yoo:** Which is incredible because I'm assuming that it would rain some days it's rain.

**Susan Schneider:** It didn't matter. We just all were there.

**Grace Yoo:** Yeah, and then as you were there, were there people that you just recognized that were there all the time? Did it become this place where it's also just your friends and--

**Susan Schneider:** Yes. And it was a place of safety and purpose.

**Grace Yoo:** Yeah. That's great, a place of safety and purpose. That's huge actually.

**Susan Schneiider:** It really is. It truly is and it helped me not be afraid of anything.

**Grace Yoo:** Yeah, that's amazing. There were several things that occurred before the strike. Like the assassination of Martin Luther King and also Robert Kennedy. I don't know if all of those things impacted your consciousness and I'm curious what activities in particular were you involved with. Was it sort of the picketing or...

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, I mean it was picketing, it was getting together with the social work department and the professors who really...Part of what Pat Precell, the director of the department, taught us was real sense of social responsibility and dealing with racism. He did a thing of there were a couple of Black Panthers who had gotten arrested and he took another mortgage out on his house in order to bail them out of jail.

**Grace Yoo:** Wow

**Susan Schneider:** And, shortly after that the FBI raided his house and he described what it was like to have his daughter's underwear drawer gone through

(00:15:03-00:20:21) **Grace Yoo:** Wow. And he was chair of social work at the time?

**Susan Schneider:** Yes, he was. He was. But his like Stanley Ovsavet had gotten fired because he had been involved as a union organizer before he was a professor and he was a threat to the campus. He was a threat to the administration. So, I was involved in organizing with other students in the social work department. At that time, there were only, there was only three trains within the department. One was casework for those people who wanted to go into private practice or adoption. There was also group work and then there was community organization and there was a small group of us who did the community organization.

**Grace Yoo:** Wow. What aspect of the strike was the most meaningful?

**Susan Schneider:** The aspect of the strike that was the most meaningful. I think it was the coming together.

**Grace Yoo:** Coming together with other folks.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, and learning and getting to know some of the people who were trying to form the, that were fighting for the Black studies department, Asian studies, and the whole third world liberations and the benefits that we had and raising money to bail people out of jail.

**Grace Yoo:** Were you on the legal committee then?

**Susan Schneider:** I was not. I was not on a committee. Truly, I was working within my department and very involved in interfacing.

**Grace Yoo:** Right. What was the hardest part of participating in the strike?

**Susan Schneider:** I think watching people get beaten. That was horrible. That was really horrible. People who really were standing up for what they believed in and the getting beaten and arrested and dragged out and then to see them again was a wonderful thing, but it still was pretty horrible. The other thing that was hard is that there was still people that were involved in going to classes and there was a divide and there didn't need to be. I feel like people, even though we were a united group who were on strike of students and faculty and community there still were the people that have ended up running the US now. Who continued, and I mean



**Grace Yoo:** Do you remember talking to other peers to say, “You should join the strike” and they would react in different kinds of ways?

[Susan nods her head “yes”]

**Susan Schneider:** Yes. It was really, it was tragic really. And I stopped being friends with people. I stopped speaking to certain people. There really was that divide.

**Grace Yoo:** And you also got arrested. Can you talk about that day? What that was like.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah. I think we were, we had done the picketing and we were just getting together to have the rally. I believe that’s where we were and then all of a sudden, from all different sides, there were police that were coming and surrounding us. And they had batons, but it was like there was not going to be a way out. For those people who tried to get out, they got hit, they got beaten, they got dragged. So, there was only a thing of, “Okay, we’re here.” SO, we got put in and I remember being pushed with the batons and herded and then we were put in patty wagons and taken down to 850 Bryant. It was very strange, I mean it was, it was scary, but not scary. We were processed and put in cells, but then we were hosed, the women were hosed down and I thought

(00:20:21-00:25:00) **Grace Yoo:** Oh, my goodness. That’s horrible. That was like January, it’s cold.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, yeah it was January. It was very cold and we were wet and there was no-

**Grace Yoo:** Towel or anything.

**Susan Schneider:** No. No, no, there was no towels for sure.

**Grace Yoo:** Oh, my goodness

**Susan Schneider:** And there was water on the floor and I really just wanted a cigarette, this just pissed me off. So, there were some on the ground and I was trying to smoke them, I mean picking them up and trying to smoke and I think somebody had a match, but it was pretty horrible. It was pretty horrible. I feel like I was more lucky than other people, but yeah. It was pretty horrible. But I’ve been, during this time I was also on other picket lines; for Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers.

**Grace Yoo:** So, you were already sort of involved in the activist movements and there was...

**Susan Schneider:** And going on marches against the Vietnam War, even though friends of mine were in Vietnam and coming back with horrible PTSD and horrible. Anyways, there I was arrested and I felt still another sense of certainty that everything was going to be okay. Maybe it's the polyoma in me, but we were bailed out with student organizers that bailed us out. There was one bail bondsman, Jerry Bearish bail bond who I think he was just thrilled doing this. He was just, you know.

**Grace Yoo:** Well, there's 400 of you!

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, right! So, I got bailed out and I went home and I said, "Oh, my god, I just turned 21 today." Got out, celebrated, went to the corner store. There was no party, so I got a beer and said, "Happy Birthday, Susan Schneider."

**Grace Yoo:** Wow, and then you didn't have to go back? You had to go back like people, were part of the legal issues later, you had to go back and they go back to court in a couple months later.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, in the summer. In the summer we were put into groups and assigned public defenders. I knew some of the people in my group and didn't, but got to know everybody. And the trial went on, it was pretty...there was this man on the jury who kept smiling at me and I thought, "Oh, he likes me." So, then all of a sudden, his wife would show up. Now I think, I don't know he'd be thrown off the jury, but anyways. When I had to testify, a friend of mine took me shopping. I had to wear, they said, "You got to look presentable. You got to look like..." I really thought that everybody on my trial. Oh, sorry. I'm going to interrupt. I'm going to stop for a minute. During the time that the trial was going on, I had a boyfriend by the name Richard. Who during that summer worked for the YMCA as a camp counselor. He decided as a fun field trip for the kids, he took them on a field trip to sit in on court. So, they all walked in holding hands, Richard, and they're all wearing little bandanas and the whole thing and they sat. And who knows if they went home and told their mommies and daddies what was going on, but it was really a joy to see them and maybe they got something out of it.

**Grace Yoo:** And they came to support you!

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, they did. They did.

**Grace Yoo:** Which is great. And Richard, your boyfriend at the time was like, "Okay, we're all coming."

(00:25:00-00:30:08) **Susan Schneider:** Yeah, yeah, which is good he didn't lost his job.

**Grace Yoo:** They all gone on the train, came downtown. Yeah.

**Susan Schneider:** It was good. It was supposed to be the determination after the deliberation and we got convicted and I, of all three charges: unlawful assembly, disturbing the peace, and failure to disperse. I thought, “What?” There was this guy, this juror who I thought I had a special relationship with and he actually got in touch with me after and he said, “I’m really sorry. I tried to hold out and they convinced me that to have a hung jury would have been a bad thing, so I was pressured into voting to convict.” So, that was the end of that. That was the end of that story and then him and his wife tried to befriend me and that didn’t, that was kind of weird.

[inaudible]

**Susan Schneider:** No, but I did have a fine of \$150, which at the time was \$150- and three-years’ probation and suspended sentence, 90 days suspended sentence.

**Grace Yoo:** Do you remember other peers having different outcomes?

**Susan Schneider:** Yes, some of them went to jail and there was one guy, very interesting, he was also arrested, but he had a real difficult time waking up in the morning and he would always come to court late. He was very likeable. Some of them went to jail and there was one guy, very interesting, he was also arrested, but he had a real difficult time waking up in the morning and he would always come to court late. H, his name [censored out]. He’s no longer living. A very wonderful guy, he was part of, he worked in the Filipino community, wonderful man. Anyways, the judge didn’t know what to do with him, really liked him, but he was like a total f\*ck up. He just was, sorry. What he did was is that he told [censored name] he had to go to jail every single night during his trial. And the bailiff liked him so much. Was he a bailiff or a sheriff? He took him home to have dinner with his family every night and then had to return him to jail because in jail then they would get him up and he could come to trial.

**Sydney Jackson:** On time.

**Susan Schneider:** [nods head] Yeah.

**Grace Yoo:** And everyone arrested were put into groups?

**Susan Schneider:** We were and even in my group we didn’t all get the same sentence. There was somebody else who had to go to jail, Phillip had to go to jail.

**Grace Yoo:** How long?

**Susan Schneider:** Months, actually months. And another young woman, , and I think that he punished her because her mother got up and advocated, “My daughter is a good woman and she’s only standing up for what she believes in and what is right!” She got sent to jail.

**Grace Yoo:** What was your father feeling during this time period as you had gotten arrested in January and then did the court date. What was he feeling about all of this?

**Susan:** Well, I had his brother, my uncle, would also sit in court. He was a cab driver and he would, when he was on a break from his cab, he would come and sit in. I had a lot of support from him. My father was very worried about me and I think part of that is because he has a very difficult time raising us and he came from a different country.

**Grace Yoo:** What country did he come from?

**Susan Schneider:** He came from Kiev. It was in Russia at the time wasn’t Ukraine. He fled and so he didn’t know what was going to happen. He sat in as well, but he was more concerned than anything else.

**Sydney Jackson:** How did your involvement with the strike overtime? And then how did it change after the strike, after you graduated, and after you retired?

(00:30:08-00:35:53) **Susan Schneider:** Well, big surprise, I’m not retired. [laughing] It’s like the wheel is going around again or something. After the strike, I just continued to work for what I believed in. In my department, with part of the community organization, we were all part of the strike, but our final project was putting a day together that we invited the community. It was called “Social Work Is Dead” and I had a wardrobe closet, we brought that. We put it on a truck and that was the coffin and it said “Social work is dead.” Part of that is because of what was happening in the, not just the community, but the U.S. and of course the world. New Year’s Eve, they were having raids in Nevada on AFDC mother’s houses and if there was a man in the house, she would be cut off aid. It was really something that I felt we needed to just work together, towards things that we believed in. I’ve always worked for the Department of Public Health and there was a period when it was the late 70s that some of my co-workers were starting to get sick.

Gay men starting to get sick and to die and they had the quote, “gay cancer” is what it was called. And then my cousin who was, I don’t know if you guys know who Liberace was, he was the opening act and he also died of AIDS. So, I just sort of dedicated my life to working with people with HIV and that’s been part of my community organizing currently for the past, close to 40 years. I’ve worked at Laguna Honda Hospital and we started an AIDS unit it’s the only skilled nursing facility that has a dedicated AIDS unit and because we’re part of the Department of Public Health, everybody who’s there, most everybody who’s there, is on medical or undocumented and we are the safety net. Within that job, we started, its called the Positive Care Community, and we have groups and work with families. Some people because it’s public health, some people really have been not really welcomed by their families for many years.

They've been thrown out, some people don't even know they have HIV unless they're in the emergency room and the emergency room does a rapid HIV test. So, we get people that have been end stage AIDS because they never knew they had it.

**Sydney Jackson:** Oh, wow.

**Susan Schneider:** About 30 years ago, close to 30 years ago, we started joining the AIDS walk in Golden Gate Park and we have busses, the Laguna Honda buses and we put the patients that are able to go in the bus and their families come and volunteers come and staff come and I'm so pleased people actually take the day off of work and come. Nurses are able to come and it's so wonderful for the patients. Many of the people are in wheelchairs or some of them have HIV dementia and they wander, so everybody who goes, every patient who goes has a "buddy" who will either push them in a wheelchair or just walk with them hand in hand. Going down the path in Golden Gate Park and being cheered by the sisters of Perpetual Indulgence or a marching band it's wonderful. The other thing that I did in 2012 was go to Washington DC to the international AIDS conference and it was so symbolic that it was in Washington DC because the first time they had the International Conference, the US was not letting people from other countries in who had HIV and this time they were, but we still did a march on the White House saying we needed more funding.

(00:35:53-00:39:52) **Sydney Jackson:** Can I ask what year was the first international AIDS conference? Do you remember?

**Susan Schneider:** I do not know. I don't know, we could look it up.

**Sydney Jackson:** Okay

**Susan Schneider:** People from other countries, especially Africa, talked about what it was like, the HIV treatment in Africa, and what it was like to not be allowed into the US. Even other states in the US were not wanting people with HIV, they were putting them on the bus to San Francisco. State College, it made me fearless being involved in the strike and meeting others who were also fearless, who stood up for what they believe in. For me, social work equals social good.

**Sydney Jackson:** I feel like, she answered a majority of the questions...

**Susan Schneider:** Did I?

**Sydney Jackson:** With your total answer. Yeah, you did. That's beautiful.

**Grace Yoo:** In terms of the strike, what would you like students to know. What would you like students to know about your participation and activism at the time?

**Susan Schneider:** I think it's just important to speak your truth and if I had a closing message was, I think I did my best and I have no regrets.

**Grace Yoo:** I guess another question, do you feel like even today, your participation in the 1968 strike, has it made that impact even as you, in various decades of your life do you feel like it's impacted up?

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, it did actually, it did. Truthfully, some of the things, it all sort of blurs together because I think I'm getting older, but when I look at pictures or when I get together with people that I'm still involved with from the strike, it makes everything so worth it. Like, the first time Trump was elected and there was the women's march and I just had surgery and there was no way I wasn't going to go to the march, but I borrowed a wheelchair from Laguna Honda [laughing] and I was able to go. I was so happy and people took turns pushing me. And now, I'm waiting for the march.

**Sydney Jackson:** That's what I was going to ask you. You know, a lot of students, especially me, I don't feel like I don't know what to do. Especially being Ethnic Studies, we feel like maybe that may come under attack.

**Susan Schneider:** It's scary as shit. I'm sorry for my language, but scary for sure.

**Sydney Jackson:** No, for sure and I think when we had the lunch a couple of weeks ago, I just wanted to hear all of you guys' advice because super scared. I don't know what to do.

(00:39:52-00:46:52) **Susan Schneider:** Also being in San Francisco, we're well hated. We really are and that's the importance of...I know Newsome is scared. He's trying to get together with other Governors, "What are we going to do?" But I don't know what this new mayor is like at all. I don't know, I just don't know. When I went to Townsen's memorial service, yeah. And London spoke, but Peskin was there as well. It was like Amos Brown was saying we gotta do something to save the community because Townsen, he was so passionate. I don't know what he would be thinking right this minute, but I don't think he ever gave up the fight and I don't think any of us should. Funding's been cut before, but I just think it's important to not wither away. I just think to continue together.

**Grace Yoo:** Yeah, I think Susan, your generation did wither away. You were facing so much, I mean [inaudible] but you all kind of kept going.

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, the FBI was really, really, really active, not just to Percel's house, to the department head. We were involved because of what had happened in Solidaridad and I did some field work at the National Lawyers Guild and we started what was called The People's Law School and the FBI came there and they were looking. There were some attorneys that were pretty active and pretty wonderful, but they had gone missing. Anyways, I just think I understand where you're at, but it's important to know who to trust.

**Sydney Jackson:** What was your favorite memory or moment of the strike if you could pick one or two?

**Susan Schneider:** Well, I told the one about the lady with the baked potato. [laughing]

**Sydney Jackson:** I love that. I love baked potatoes.

**Susan Schneider :** Yeah, she just stayed in my heart. I mean, we were all freezing and she just showed up with this giant basket of baked potatoes. Another wonderful moment, well a lot of the entertainers I thought were great, really wonderful, but there was a wedding that we all participated in planning and we had to do it on a zero-dollar budget. It was two people from the strike, I did kind of a dumb thing, I said that I would be in charge of decorations. I started, I don't know why, but I thought I started calling funeral homes and asked if they had any leftover flowers from funerals that we could use.

**Sydney Jackson:** Oh, that's smart, actually! That's smart.

**Susan Schneider:** And then there was like a pause, "Well, the flowers normally go to the cemetery" But we got some flowers. It was a lovely wedding, they're no longer together. [inaudible] It was, really.

**Grace Yoo:** Also, you said you have your boyfriend during the strike, did you meet him before the strike or during the strike or after?

**Susan Schneider:** I met him, he was working in the social work office. I wasn't a social work student; he was just working in the office and when I decided to go and I wanted to put in my application to be a grad student there and that's how I met him.

**Grace Yoo:** And that was in like, 68'?

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah.

**Grace Yoo:** So part of being boyfriend, girlfriend was the strike participation in the strike?

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, but it was so much more because we're still really close. I'm so blessed to know this person, I really am and he's been very supportive in my life and I hope I've been supportive of his life.

**Grace Yoo:** Are there other friends you feel like you made during this strike while you were on strike?

**Susan Schnieder:** Yeah, actually. Barry and Bob Biderman, both brothers.

**Sydney Jackson :** I love them!

**Susan Schneider:** Yeah, and then Joy was Barry's sister-in-law and she lives in England now. She's great. She writes poetry, she's wonderful. Liz Strand, yeah. Who else? Doug and whenever I run into Rodger it's just a joy.

**Grace Yoo:** And you were like 20 at the time?

**Susan:** [nods her head] Yeah, but running into people, in fact I just ran into Donna James.

**Grace Yoo:** Alvaador? Yeah, she was at the lunch as well.

**Susan Schneider:** And that was just wonderful, just talking to her about Lo Siete and all of that. It feels like when I see them it still, once again, reminds me I'm with people that I feel safe with.

## **ADDENDUM:**

**May 5, 2025**

In my first year as a graduate student in Social Work in 1970, I was lucky to get a paid stipend at the VA hospital in Menlo Park, CA. That stipend helped my pay my way. One day, I was called to a board room in Human Resources—I had no idea why I was there. There were other people who were also waiting. I spoke to a young African American man who had also been called. He did not know why he had been called either. He got called in before they called me and left looking very unhappy. I have no idea what happened to him.

When I was called into the room, I was questioned about my political involvement, my student strike activities, and being arrested on State College property. The field placement was nearly over and I was allowed to finish the assignment.



Later, I found that the arrest and conviction negatively influenced my ability to be hired in social work governmental positions at the beginning of my career. I interviewed but did not get hired for social work jobs at the VA or at the State. Instead, the jobs I was hired for were lower paying at small non-profit organizations. My sentencing post-conviction was \$150 fine, which I paid. Ninety days suspended jail term and 3 years' probation. At the end of the 3 years, I made sure that my record was entirely expunged.

- By Susan Schneider