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*Interview took place at Arctic College following a conference of the Inuktitut Literacy Council. I began by showing her my charts of the history of the Inuit organizations and the work people did on the creation of Nunavut. Throughout the interview she is feeding a little baby.*

*I want to ask you about your life, your experiences. I know you are active now in the Literacy Council, and what is not really known at all is what women were doing during the creation of Nunavut. We talked earlier about people like Helen Maksagak and Meeka Kilabuk and women who are active in that way, but a lot of people did a lot of very important things in the communities.*

Women have always been there as well. It's just that the men were the head, but women were there to support their husbands. Nowadays it's like women are becoming more like they do exist, and they have a voice. Back then they did not. I would say in that society the men were more domineering and that's how Inuit women would be, and even the men. As society changed then so do the voices of either the men or the women.

*But even back then there were a lot of women who were outspoken, who were well respected as advisors or were members of leadership families, who would have an important advisory role or were important privately (while men were important publicly). I know one story where the wife of the leader told him to take all the men hunting so that the women would have the time free to sort things out without the men.*

Yeap. I often wonder when I was growing up and women would come to my mother and vice versa and that was the time for women to discuss things amongst themselves. The men, they are more active, and they would be going out hunting. And women would discuss among themselves during the time they were preparing the meat or sewing.

*Do you think there were different expectations for girls coming up from leadership families?*

Like my role, and the role of my elder sisters was so much different. I guess my parents expected the oldest siblings to take on looking after the children. Their role was quite different compared to the role of the younger siblings.

*So what was expected of you?*

Well, I guess as society changes then you know their roles have changed as well.

*When did you first become aware of Inuit starting to get together and trying to gain a greater voice or become more active?*

I knew there were different people coming into our community. I remember how the Board from Labrador had to meet important people among the Inuit, but I was so young that I didn't know, I just thought, 'Wow, a guy coming from Labrador to live at our house for a few days, how interesting!' This was around the 1970s when people were getting together, but it didn't dawn on me that they were meeting to discuss our future. They have done all of this for the future of their Inuit children and it is quite touching. They had a voice, and they were very important because they were decision makers for us.

*What did people think of these folks?*

My parents has respect for them in the Inuit tradition of if you want people to respect you then you have to respect them first. They respected their role, and what they did.

*So these young guys did what was necessary to gain the respect of people like your parents?*

Yes. My parents were quite old, my father was quite old, coming out of the trading business and then moving into a community so that his children could attend school. This was a different lifestyle for them.

*What was your father's name?*

Steven Angulalik.

*And your mum's name?*

Mabel Angulalik. Yeah – they're long gone. Steven was a fur trader and one of the first trading companies was called the CanAlaska, which was the very first, before Hudson Bay, and we would trade with them for box cutters. I often wonder what life was like in his generation, people living off the land and Southerners coming up here and what did they expect and everything. It has changed in such a short period of time.

*What do you remember from later times like the 1980s when you had the plebiscite, and more negotiations and the constitutional issues with Aboriginal rights?*

My feeling was what's going to happen? What will happen to us? I was sort of afraid, Inuit rights versus the rights of the whole society. I knew that the Inuit way of life was changing and you know to support our culture we needed to support what they are doing.

*What was it like in the communities then because in my mind I think about all these guys spending so much time away and I imagine the women sort of holding the communities together and social programs being developed? What were women doing?*

They were involved in the social programs. They were becoming more aware, more in existence, they have a voice and there are more rights. My mother was a great mentor to us and she would tell us from her perspective, she would often say, 'Women are

becoming more independent.' I remember she would say, 'In the old days, I didn't have a voice, but I would have to follow what my grandparents, what my mother, what my husband would tell me to do.' She would get so confused and sometimes she would say, 'You know, they will struggle for awhile, women will struggle for awhile, but if they would just listen to what the old way of doing things meant, then it wouldn't be so bad.' Sometimes she felt that because a couple of her daughters were separated from their husbands, because she believed in marriage and she believed you had to live with your husband no matter what the situation, and at the same time she believed Inuit women having their own voice, and at the same time you had to follow the Inuit tradition. You have to combine the two. If you combine the two, you'll be ok.

*What other things were they doing at that time? I know that the housing development was big, and Pauktuutit came along.*

The centralization of government in community governments, better education for all our children.

*How did you first get involved in community issues?*

First, I studied community alcohol and drug work, and then I worked in a group home. I was a foster parent and I am a teacher. I became so aware because it was so close to me, my brother committed suicide. I was young and rebellious and I was doing ordinary teenage things and my brother was in a relationship with this girlfriend, and then they broke up and he was the only son, with 11 sisters. I found myself becoming aware of social issues more. We had them in our family, you know? It was big, and bad and when it happens in your own family, you are changed by it. That's when I became involved in counseling alcohol and becoming a foster family. I guess my life has always been focused around children, either being at home or being a teacher.

*Helen Maksagak started out the same way, one thing led to another and the next thing you know she is the commissioner.*

She is very well respected.

*Who comes to mind when you think of women who are very respected and could be role models?*

I think of Edna Elias, my mother who was very traditional, Mary Simon, the president of Pauktuutit, Helen Maksagak, who is very respected. Those are very important people. These are the women who are my role models.

*What did Pauktuutit mean to you?*

They had a voice for women, like young working mothers at that time. They understood and know and modeled women's rights and at the same time, your tradition, your culture was quite important.