

Mill Valley Oral History Program

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JENNY FULLE

**An Oral History Interview
Conducted by Debra Schwartz in 2017**

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In this oral history, Jenny Fulle recounts the remarkable story of how she opened the way for girls to play Little League baseball throughout the nation. Born in San Francisco in 1962, Jenny moved over to Mill Valley with her mother in 1971. Jenny recalls playing pick-up baseball games with the boys at Boyle Park as a child. In 1974, she tried to sign up for Little League but was turned away on account of her gender. Jenny recounts how she then wrote a letter to the White House, appealing directly to President Nixon to intervene. She describes the controversy the case stirred up, her eventual victory in the Marin County Superior Court, and finally how she led the league in home runs that year. Integrating Little League forced her to develop a thick skin at an early age, and in this way Jenny credits the experience with shaping the rest of her life. Jenny describes her life after Little League, especially her long and prolific career in the film industry, and concludes this oral history by singing a verse from "Take Me Out to the Ball Game."

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Oral History of Jenny Fulle
June 5th, 2017

Editor's note: This transcript has been reviewed by Jenny Fulle, who made minor corrections and clarifications.

00:02 Debra Schwartz: Today is June 5th, 2017. My name is Debra Schwartz and I am sitting here on behalf of the Mill Valley Historical Society in the Mill Valley Library, speaking with Jenny Fulle. Jenny, thank you so much. Today we're doing our interview via FaceTime, and hopefully it all goes well. Thank you, Jenny, for giving us this time today to talk about your amazing story and the impact you've had for Mill Valley, and for cities and towns all over the United States. First, I'd just like to introduce you, Jenny. You grew up here in Mill Valley and you've gone on to adulthood. We're going to be talking about your story in Mill Valley here as a child, but you've grown up since then, and you are a visual effects producer in the film industry, correct?

00:57 Jenny Fulle: That is correct.

00:58 Debra Schwartz: And you've been a film executive.

01:01 Jenny Fulle: Yes, I've spent many years as a film executive as well.

01:04 Debra Schwartz: But your impact on the world at large was felt as far back as childhood, and that's what I'm so excited to be able to talk about today, because you are truly a Little League pioneer.

01:18 Jenny Fulle: Well, thanks, Debra. I'm excited to be here and talking about it.

01:22 Debra Schwartz: Okay, so let us go back in time to the '70s. You were living in Mill Valley, and you were here with your mother, and even before then, you had relatives — let's start with them, shall we? Let's talk about your grandparents, just a little background information about your family, if you would.

01:43 Jenny Fulle: Sure. On my mother's side we're — I'm not sure which generation San Franciscan. I'm probably fifth or sixth, something like that. And on my father's side my great-great-grandparents came over and settled in San Francisco from Sweden right before the 1906 earthquake. So, that scared them a bit and they took off to Canada for a little bit, but then my great-grandmother came back. So, everybody's from San Francisco. I was born in San Francisco in 1962, and we lived there for nine years. In 1971 my mom was looking, I think, for more of a suburb type of lifestyle so we moved over to Mill Valley.

02:22 Debra Schwartz: And you said you were sixth generation in San Francisco?

02:27 Jenny Fulle: I know that I am one, two, third-generation on my father's side, and I don't even know how far back it goes on my mother's side. But it goes back farther than that.

02:47 Debra Schwartz: Would you please be so kind as to give me the names of your grandparents?

02:53 Jenny Fulle: Sure. When my great-great-grandparents came from Sweden their last name was Holmstrom, and when they hit Ellis Island they said, "That's too confusing, you're Holm, you're Strom." So he was Joseph Strom and his wife — her name is escaping me now. Ruth Fulle was their daughter, and my great-grandmother, and kind of my person. We all have our person and grandma Ruth was definitely my person. On my mom's side, I had Betty Briggs and then my mom was Donna Lyons, that was her married name. She got married in Mill Valley probably when I was about 12 years old, and my father was Mike Fulle, but he died when I was quite young.

03:35 Debra Schwartz: Quite young, really? Before the whole thing with the Little League came down?

03:40 Jenny Fulle: Yes, he was one of the infamous jumpers from the Golden Gate Bridge.

03:45 Debra Schwartz: Oh, that's interesting.

03:45 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

03:49 Debra Schwartz: Okay, well, let us go back then to the time that you came to Mill Valley, and tell me a little bit about your life in Mill Valley if you can.

04:00 Jenny Fulle: Sure. We moved to Mill Valley when I was nine, and I went to Marin Terrace School for fourth and fifth grade, and it was a great time. It was a fantastic neighborhood, there was lots of kids, we ran in a pack, and they were really great times. It was kind of Mayberry, I think at that time in Mill Valley.¹

04:25 Debra Schwartz: And Marin Terrace School is — was — because we don't have Marin Terrace now.

04:30 Debra Schwartz: That's right, that's right.

04:31 Debra Schwartz: Where was it located?

04:33 Jenny Fulle: We lived on Loring, and it was kind of at that five points, just up behind Tam. If you weaved up Homestead and went up there, it was just up above Tam High School.

¹ Mayberry was a fictitious community that provided the setting for various television sitcoms.—Editor.

04:45 Debra Schwartz: Did you move here after your father's death?

04:48 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

04:48 Debra Schwartz: Yes.

04:48 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, he died when I was two.

04:50 Debra Schwartz: Oh, two, I see.

04:51 Jenny Fulle: I have no memory of him.

04:53 Debra Schwartz: Okay. So you're living in Mill Valley and you're having this idyllic childhood, from what you describe. And you have an interest in sports?

05:02 Jenny Fulle: I do. Part of what we would do is when we would get together is we would go up to Marin Terrace because in those days, they didn't lock the schools up when school was out so you had access to the fields, and we'd go up, and we'd play baseball, and we'd play all sorts of different things up there with the neighborhood kids. There was probably a good 12 of us at that time in the same age range.

05:23 Debra Schwartz: Do you remember the names of your friends?

05:25 Jenny Fulle: I remember the Rockwells, Connie and Wendy and Jeff. Their house was kind of the clubhouse for the neighborhood kids, probably much to the dismay of the parents sometimes. And Paul, and Keith, and the Kelloggs, they were a huge clan that lived up above Marin Terrace. I think they had four or five kids. Lori was my friend, Lori Kellogg. We're still friends on Facebook today. So yeah, those are some of the kids that we played with. The Walshes, Tommy and Debbie. It was a lot of fun.

06:00 Debra Schwartz: And do you remember any favorite teachers from Marin Terrace School?

06:05 Jenny Fulle: I loved my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Heaton. But she did betray me at one point. My mom used to make me wear a dress once a week to school. She had made the dress, we didn't have a lot of money, so she would make some of my clothes. She would put me in what I thought was a hideous dress and send me to school, so I would take my jeans and I'd throw them out my bedroom window into the bushes and I'd leave in my dress and grab my jeans and I'd tuck it in and I'd go to school. And apparently Mrs. Heaton ratted me out. She told my mom that I was wearing pants on dress day.

06:39 Debra Schwartz: So now was there a dress code for your school?

06:43 Jenny Fulle: I was quite a tomboy when I was kid. My mom just wanted me to wear a dress once a week. And I just didn't wanna do it.

06:52 Debra Schwartz: Uh-huh. And so your teacher was aware of this arrangement?

06:55 Jenny Fulle: Well, it probably didn't look great. The dress probably didn't tuck in nicely to the pants. [laughs]

07:02 Jenny Fulle: The nine-year-old me thinks that it was perfectly passable, but I can imagine that wasn't the case.

07:07 Debra Schwartz: Jenny, that's funny. [laughs] So, tell me about that time. Now, it's Little League season, and you've gotta go sign up. Tell us all the story about what happened.

07:21 Jenny Fulle: I really wanted to play Little League. At school, I could play with the boys in after school hours, but I don't remember it being co-ed during PE. I remember them breaking off the girls and the boys. The girls, they wanted to play horsies in the field and the two popular girls — I don't remember their names, Erin and something else — they would always be the riders and all the girls would trot around the field and it just didn't seem fun to me. When we did get to play softball with the girls, they were very disinterested in that, and they wanted to pick flowers and make little daisy chains in the field, and it was very frustrating for me as somebody who wanted to play seriously. I've always been competitive. I would play with the boys as much as I could and especially after school. I used to go down to Boyle Park a lot. Nine seems young. My time reference isn't — I don't know the exact age that I was. But as I said Mill Valley was a little bit like Mayberry back then. I would ride my bike to Boyle Park, which was probably four miles, five miles, something like that, and play in pick-up games down there. When it came time for Little League it seemed only natural that I should be able to go and I should be able to play. So I decided that I would go ahead and try and sign up. And I put my — I had long hair at the time — I put it up in a ponytail up into my hat and I went down and I thought I would just see what happened. They were asking everybody for a birth certificate, and obviously my birth certificate was gonna tell them I was a girl, so I left in disgust.

08:58 Debra Schwartz: Where did you go? Was it on the baseball grounds? When you went to go sign up where did you go sign up?

09:05 Jenny Fulle: I remember it, and I don't know, it's a long time ago, but I remember it as being tables literally right at Boyle Park. I don't know if that's true or not. But it seems to me like literally they set up eight-foot tables and there were parents manning the station there and you went and you signed up. I was by myself, I was not — I think a lot of the kids were probably with their parents.

09:25 Debra Schwartz: Did you tell your mom you were going to do this?

09:28 Jenny Fulle: I don't remember. I may have. I was given a lot of freedom when I was a child, as long as I was home by dark or by dinner. We lived in a very safe place

and it was a different time so, whether she knew or not I don't know. She wouldn't have discouraged it if she knew. She probably would've said, "Okay, that's great, hon. Have fun, see you for dinner."

09:49 Debra Schwartz: What's your mom's name again?

09:51 Jenny Fulle: Her name's Donna.

09:52 Debra Schwartz: Donna. Are you an only child?

09:55 Jenny Fulle: I was an only child then. My mother remarried Steve Lyons, like I said, probably in 1974 and I have a brother, Skye Lyons, from that marriage.

10:07 Debra Schwartz: Okay. But basically at that time you were on your own, an independent spirit roaming about.

10:14 Jenny Fulle: Yes, that's right.

10:15 Debra Schwartz: You realize at that time that you were not going to be able to sign up because you knew that they were going to see you were a girl. Did you really think in your mind that you might be able to pass?

10:31 Jenny Fulle: It wasn't like I was gonna pretend to be a boy the whole season. I don't think I realized that it was such a hard and fast rule that girls just couldn't play. I guess I thought if I just go, and it's kind of don't ask don't tell, that they maybe wouldn't notice and then I'd sign up and they'd see how good I was and I'd be on the team and it would all be fine.

10:52 Debra Schwartz: Mm-hmm. Yeah. That's logical.

10:55 Jenny Fulle: For a 10-year-old it's very logical.

10:58 Debra Schwartz: You go home in disgust, then what?

11:01 Jenny Fulle: So I'm upset. I went home and I was very upset about it because they wouldn't let me play. No child wants to be excluded and not be able to play. So I decided I was gonna write a letter to President Nixon about this, letting him know how wrong it was and how unfair it was and that I should be able to play baseball. I remember sitting at our kitchen table with my stepdad, Steve. He was kinda looking over my shoulder and helping me write it. I think it was on a piece of 8.5 x 11 ruled paper, using a pencil. I addressed it to, "President Nixon, The White House, Washington, DC," and it got mailed off and that was that.

11:43 Debra Schwartz: Did somebody actually say to you, "No, Jenny"? Or you just could surmise this on your own?

11:51 Jenny Fulle: Honestly, I don't have a clear memory of whether I pushed it and was told that girls can't play. I was probably very obviously a girl when I was trying to sign up, and I would guess that they made it very clear that there are no girls allowed in Little League.

12:09 Debra Schwartz: You actually signed up all to the point where they asked for your birth certificate?

12:13 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

12:13 Debra Schwartz: Oh, so you'd actually filled out the forms and —

12:17 Jenny Fulle: I would imagine so. Or I might have walked up to the table and they might have immediately said, "We're gonna need to see your birth certificate before we give you the forms."

12:25 Debra Schwartz: Okay, so you write a letter and you mail it to President Nixon.

12:31 Jenny Fulle: So, a few months went by and I didn't think too much about it. I wasn't gonna be able to play Little League, but I would still go down and spend a lot of time at the park. Watching was second best to playing, a distant second, mind you. And about three months later I got a letter from a gentleman who was running the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and he said that the President had asked him to respond to my letter, and that they were preparing guidelines to handle this type of discrimination. I'm sure that it was all based on Title IX that had been recently passed. So, that was that, just, "We're preparing guidelines to handle that type of discrimination." A friend of mine's mom — my friend Paul Shea, his mom, whose name I can't remember now — worked for the *Pacific Sun*, I'm sorry, the *Mill Valley Record* at the time. So she knew that I had gotten a letter back and she thought it would be a very interesting story, so the *Mill Valley Record* did a front-page article on it about my trying to play baseball in Little League, not being able to, writing the President and getting a response. From that front-page article in the *Mill Valley Record*, the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* both picked up on it and they did interviews and then the whole story sort of started taking on a life of its own and picking up momentum.

13:55 Debra Schwartz: So just for those that are listening that may not be aware of the Title IX, I'm going to read it out loud so we can understand that this is the premise in which you're able to continue on into this effort to include girls into baseball. And in 1972 the US Department of Education enforces Title IX, which stated that, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." So this is the premise of what you're able to launch your resistance to the exclusion of women in the sports.

14:46 Jenny Fulle: Right.

14:46 Debra Schwartz: So now you've got some public notoriety, you're 10 years old here, right?

14:52 Jenny Fulle: That's right, 10 or 11.

14:54 Debra Schwartz: 10 or 11.

14:54 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, 10.

14:56 Debra Schwartz: Yes. So, how was that for you? How was it suddenly to become in the center of focus involved in this legal skirmish?

15:10 Jenny Fulle: Initially, I think that I was happy, I was hopeful, I thought, "Now they're gonna let me play." People were taking notice and it wasn't long after the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* stories that NOW, the National Organization for Women, was just coming into its own. They'd had a Marin chapter that had just been newly formed, and Lee Hunt was the president. She contacted my mother and said, "We think this is something that we would like to support you on and see what we can do." So my mother and I, I guess we talked about it and we thought, "Yes, let's do that."

15:47 Debra Schwartz: How was your mother from the beginning with this? How did she respond when you came home? She must have seen that you were upset that day when you came home.

15:57 Jenny Fulle: Yeah. My mother was always supportive. I was kind of a precocious child and I kind of did things my own way. So I think that she had learned to be supportive of me in whatever crazy endeavors I seemed to be taking on. She was always very supportive. I never remember anybody saying in my family, "Jenny, you should just let this go. Little League is for boys, just let it go." I only remember my stepfather, Steve, sitting at the table with me helping me write the letter and my parents being there for Town Hall, City Council meetings, things like that.

16:40 Debra Schwartz: So let's talk about the Town Hall and City Council meetings. We had a First Wednesday presentation at the library, hosted by the Mill Valley Historical Society. We had with us Lee Hunt, the attorney who contacted you, and Ed Addeo, who'd been working with the planning. Was that what he was involved in? Planning or Parks?

17:01 Jenny Fulle: I believe so. Yeah, Parks.

17:03 Debra Schwartz: So there was some discussion about how that went down. There were some very mixed reactions to your request to play.

17:14 Jenny Fulle: Yeah. There were. I think I talked a little bit about this at our library panel. I remember some of the negativity, but I don't remember a lot of it. I know it was there and I know that — I do have flashes of memory of women standing up, as

part of the anti-women's lib movement, whatever their name was, and I certainly remember reading about it, why girls shouldn't play, and the lot. "We don't want girls to hear that language," "What if they get hit in the nether regions and they won't be able to have children?" and things like that. But the real ugliness that my parents sheltered me from quite a bit, the only ugliness that I had to deal with was perhaps from peers in school, not in grammar school, that didn't happen, but in junior high school, as we're becoming adolescents now and you're dealing with older kids. There was some teasing that happened, for sure. That was hard.

18:19 Debra Schwartz: Do you want to describe it?

18:20 Jenny Fulle: I don't have vivid memories of specific instances. I just know that I was always "Little League Jenny," especially as the case progressed, 'cause it went on for, what, a couple of years, I think. I don't have a specific instance to talk about that felt like being teased or bullied or anything like that around it, but I definitely had a sense as a child that I didn't necessarily belong in the normal groups that were happening. At that age, it's so important for most children to want to feel like they blend in and they're exactly like all of the other kids, and I know that I definitely didn't have that sense. It probably helped shape who I am today, because I had to learn to smile and pretend like I was okay, even as all these other groups were going off to do their own thing. My group was much smaller. You know what I mean. Kids, they wanna dress exactly the same. Nobody wants to stand out at that age.

19:25 Debra Schwartz: And you already are quite an individual, from a very young age.

19:29 Jenny Fulle: Yes. So it probably really did shape who I became later in life, in a very positive way, I would say.

19:35 Debra Schwartz: So how about the boys that you played baseball with? Even when you weren't playing, when you weren't allowed, this is before you were allowed to play legally, but the boys you played with on the field, did anybody ever say anything to you?

19:51 Jenny Fulle: Not at all. I don't think that the boys cared, especially at Little League age. I think that any animosity they might have felt was really them echoing the sentiments of their parents. Before Little League happened, if I would play in pick-up games, I could go to Boyle Park and join an all-boys pick-up game, no problem, and they didn't care, as far as I was as good as they were, and trying as hard, and playing as hard, it was fine. So I didn't feel it from the kids, and certainly my own teammates, once I did play Little League, as I said at the panel discussion. Some of the kids were interviewed by a newspaper and one of the kids said, "Yeah, I thought we were going to get a crappy girl, but she's pretty good." [laughs] That's all we care about up to 12 years old. There's not so much a boy and a girl thing happening with kids. I think that that comes a little bit later with puberty.

20:50 Debra Schwartz: So now, in the two years that ensued after you wrote this fateful letter to President Nixon, and there were all these meetings and legal issues and you were growing up, did your interest in wanting to play, was it sustained, or did it start to waver at any time?

21:11 Jenny Fulle: So after Little League, Babe Ruth, which was next then, in Mill Valley, they said, “No problem. You can play. We’re not gonna try and keep you out.” So I played Babe Ruth, which was, I guess, 13 to 15. And it was definitely a little harder. The boys were becoming a little bit stronger and it was very easy for me to be competitive, ’cause I was a really big girl, but the boys were definitely catching up and passing me now. So it was a little bit harder. It actually wasn’t as enjoyable for me. I played one year of Babe Ruth and then I started playing softball with the girls. And the girls and young women that were still playing at that age were more competitive and they were better players like I was.

21:56 Debra Schwartz: So what happened? Tell me, legally, what happened with the case. It goes to court, and tell me about the ruling and the ramifications and how things changed after that.

22:08 Jenny Fulle: So we had gone to City Council meetings, we had been to Parks and Rec meetings, it had been, “No, no, no, no.” In my mind, the infamous story now with Mayor Jean Barnard, the City Council, one of our last council meetings, was split. I think it was 3-3. So the deciding vote went to the, I think, first female mayor of Mill Valley, and she actually voted against it, against me, and against girls playing. Basically, her reasoning was, “Vive la différence.” And I remember actually being pretty heartbroken and pretty shocked by that even as a kid. So after that, NOW had gotten an ACLU lawyer, Rico Hurvich, to legally represent the case, and he had been working on his side of that throughout this whole process, and he’d been with us since the council meetings. So it ended up in Superior Court in Marin County, just as the Little League season was starting in what would have been my final year of eligibility. He ended up in Superior Court, and the judge ruled in our favor, saying that this is discrimination and it goes against Title IX. Either Little League lets girls play, or Little League cannot use public facilities anymore. Boyle Park is a public park. So that ruling happened.

Meanwhile, there were, I believe, there had been about four or five of us spread across the United States that were fighting at the same time. I had heard that it almost bankrupted Little League fighting all these cases. So they had decided to take one to Supreme Court. So they took it, they chose to go to New Jersey Supreme Court with that case. They were just prepping for that case and getting ready to go to trial with that, when our Superior Court judge ruled in my favor. So, armed with a court order, literally, and a bunch of cameras following behind, I showed up at the first practice. I was assigned to a team and I showed up at the first practice, court order in hand, and played my one and only season of Little League.

24:31 Debra Schwartz: Wow. [chuckles] Armed with cameras too, showing up.

24:38 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, I shouldn't say armed. I should probably say followed by.

24:41 Debra Schwartz: Followed by. Yes, marking the moment.

24:43 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

24:45 Debra Schwartz: Do you have that footage?

24:46 Jenny Fulle: There is footage that exists, and I have all the newspaper clippings. I have a whole scrapbook of — my mom saved — my mom was fabulous. She saved everything. So, I have a scrapbook now of all of the clippings throughout the whole period.

25:00 Debra Schwartz: I hope you can share those with us.

25:02 Jenny Fulle: I would love to.

25:03 Debra Schwartz: Yeah, just scan them if you can and we can include that with the information.

25:06 Jenny Fulle: Okay.

25:07 Debra Schwartz: So now you're in your final year. You're just getting under the wire for the final season that you can play, and tell me about it. How did it go?

25:16 Jenny Fulle: I loved it. I was so happy. I got up to do batting practice, that first practice and I just kept belting it over everybody's head. Full disclosure, when you don't try out for Little League you automatically get put on a minor league team. I was not allowed to play before tryouts, so even though I was a lot bigger than all of the boys and probably a year or two older than most of them, I was put on a minor league team. So, I ended up leading the league in home runs that year, which made me feel very happy and vindicated. But, my coach during that first practice when I kept hitting it over everybody's head, they said to him, one of the reporters asked him what position I would be playing, and he said, "Right now it looks like hitter." [chuckles]

26:06 Debra Schwartz: Who was your coach? Do you recall his name?

26:08 Jenny Fulle: Ned Mullins.

26:09 Debra Schwartz: Ned Mullins.

26:10 Jenny Fulle: Yeah.

26:11 Debra Schwartz: Do you remember any of your teammates?

26:13 Jenny Fulle: I don't remember my teammates.

26:14 Debra Schwartz: Yeah, it's been a while.

26:15 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

26:17 Debra Schwartz: So, there you have it. Did you, at any time in your challenge, in your fight to play, think you wouldn't be able to, or had you just set your mind to it and figured it was going to happen one way or the other?

26:30 Jenny Fulle: I'll be honest with you. After I wrote the letter to President Nixon and didn't hear back a week later, I probably thought, "What else can I do? I've taken it as high as I can. I've written the President of the United States. Nobody's listening to me," so I probably resigned myself or resolved myself to the fact that I wouldn't play then, and when I got the letter back months later, from that point on, I think that I believed that I would get to play.

26:58 Debra Schwartz: Did you ever hear from Nixon again after you were allowed to play?

27:02 Jenny Fulle: No, he was busy. This whole thing called Watergate. [chuckles] So, yeah, he was a little busy. He never came to one of my games. [chuckles]

27:13 Debra Schwartz: Well, his loss.

27:15 Jenny Fulle: Yes, exactly.

27:17 Debra Schwartz: Looking back on this time, were there any parents that came up to you to discuss things, show their support, or their lack of support? Did you feel that you were — I guess what I'm asking is, did you in your child world, did you feel separated from that goings-on of the adults and sort of insulated by the child experience, or was that line crossed because of your challenge?

27:48 Jenny Fulle: I don't feel like the line was crossed for me. I feel like I was insulated. I know that to hear Lee Hunt speak, and to hear my mother speak about it, there were threatening phone calls, there were threatening letters, but I feel like I was insulated from a lot of that. Certainly on opening weekend, the first game, the opening day of that Little League season that I played, I don't know if Boyle Park has ever seen so many people before. The cameras, and the photographers, and the parents, and the jeering parents definitely went on the opposing side's bench area on that side of the field, and they let their feelings be known. There was a lot of screaming. There was a lot of yelling. That was my worst game that I ever played that season. It was pretty tough.

28:35 Debra Schwartz: It affected you?

28:37 Jenny Fulle: Absolutely. I think I walked twice and struck out twice.

28:42 Debra Schwartz: Jenny, you know, that's a lot of pressure on a kid.

28:45 Jenny Fulle: Yeah.

28:46 Debra Schwartz: A lot of pressure.

28:49 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, you either run and you hide, and you don't wanna deal with it, or you get really thick skin. That whole experience, I think, shaped me to be as successful as I feel like I've been able to be in the rest of my life. I'm very good at hiding that fear and that insecurity.

29:10 Debra Schwartz: So, that year that you were allowed to play, were other girls playing as well?

29:19 Jenny Fulle: No. The ruling that came down from Superior Court was: "Here is the ruling moving forward." Since the season had technically started, though opening day hadn't happened, I was the only girl that was allowed to play in that year. I think it was 1974. And that same year, Supreme Court in New Jersey made the ruling for the entire country at the Supreme Court level, saying, "No, girls are going to be allowed to play." So, I was the only girl to play that year in the United States, and the following year it was opened up to all girls.

29:50 Debra Schwartz: And do you happen to know, how many girls?

29:53 Jenny Fulle: No, I do not have the stats on that.

29:55 Debra Schwartz: Jenny, you have been immortalized in Boyle Park.

30:00 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

30:00 Debra Schwartz: What month was it — a few months ago — on opening day?

30:04 Jenny Fulle: Yup, March, I think.

30:06 Debra Schwartz: Yeah, and there was a lot of support for you that day. I saw a photograph of you and many, many girls in their baseball garb, tell me about it.

30:17 Jenny Fulle: Yes. We talked a little bit about not wanting to be so different when you're a kid and certainly junior high school and my time at Tam High was like that. I just felt like I had this notoriety in Mill Valley that just, it made me very different, it was very hard, and I never regretted the experience, I loved playing baseball, but I wished that everybody would just forget about it now. So we moved to Fairfax about halfway through high school for me and I finished up at Drake and I was very glad to make the switch at that point so that I could go back into not having this Little League notoriety over my head. But going back to Boyle Park and seeing that made me feel so

incredibly proud and so loved — that seems like kind of a strong word, but so loved and appreciated — it really warmed my heart. It was one of the highlights of my life, for sure.

31:21 Debra Schwartz: And what I'm talking about, for those that are listening, immortalized is, there's now a plaque in your honor at Boyle Park.

31:27 Jenny Fulle: It's a whole boulder, Debra.

31:29 Debra Schwartz: It's a whole big boulder.

31:31 Jenny Fulle: That's right, that's right.

31:32 Debra Schwartz: That has your name and your experience on it. I wasn't there that day, sadly, but I was trying to remember from the article, how many girls are playing baseball in Little League in Mill Valley, do you recall from that day?

31:47 Jenny Fulle: I think most of the girls were in that photo that you probably saw, so I would say maybe 40, 50, something like that, and it's great. I have a son, Wyatt, and he's almost 17, but when he was young, from the time he was eligible for tee-ball, we were playing baseball in Little League. I've coached his team a couple of times, and the girls drop off as they get a little bit older, but it was a lot of fun coaching for him and having the girls on the team and kind of knowing that I'd played maybe a small part in that, though I'm sure somebody else would've done it by now if I hadn't done it back then.

32:23 Debra Schwartz: How's it coming back to Mill Valley after all these years during your 50's?

32:28 Jenny Fulle: It's actually really nice and Mill Valley is still such a great town. I was talking with somebody while I was up there for opening day and the parade and they were saying how it's growing so much and it's not the same. And for me coming — I live in Los Angeles now — so for me coming up it is the same. Progress has happened in places that I've lived since then much more quickly than it has in Mill Valley. Mill Valley retains its charm to me and its quaintness and its people, the people who live there, yourself included, are just so wonderful and so warm and so gracious.

33:08 Debra Schwartz: On to your adult life. So you go from Fairfax. Tell me a little bit of what happened as you continued on in your life, so we cannot just have the story from long ago, but update everybody to how your life has been since then.

33:30 Jenny Fulle: Okay. So we moved up to Fairfax and I went to Drake, as I said, I went there for, I guess, about a year-and-a-half, I graduated a little bit early, and tried to figure out what I wanted to do. I thought for a moment maybe I'd be a forest ranger so I went to Humboldt State and realized that I really didn't wanna be doing that. So I came back to Fairfax for a little bit and ended up — I'd just gotten a job in a restaurant, kind of as a short order cook in Tiburon. And my stepdad, Steve, had just gotten hired by George

Lucas, they were moving ILM², which is his visual effects division that had done *Star Wars*, they were getting ready, they were doing *Empire Strikes Back* and they were setting up in San Rafael and they were just starting construction out at Skywalker Ranch. So he was running the General Services department at that time, which included janitorial, and over the summer in 1980, one of his janitors had twisted his ankle and he needed somebody to fill in for six weeks. So since it was only six weeks it wasn't nepotism and they brought me in to be a janitor and in that six-week period, Steve was actually brought on to go out and be the manager of the ranch and kind of oversee that and develop the vineyards and things like that. So once he left I was such a good janitor that they kept me on. So my career started at 18, my film career started at 18 as a janitor for George Lucas at ILM during *Empire Strikes Back*. Yeah, it's been a fun ride since then.

35:03 Debra Schwartz: It seems like the cameras follow you wherever you go.

35:07 Jenny Fulle: Well, they weren't following me then. I was following the camera at that point. I'm a behind-the-scenes person.

35:13 Debra Schwartz: They're out and about. So, continue.

35:19 Jenny Fulle: I worked there for eight years, ending my ILM journey as a coordinator at ILM doing films. I worked on one of the *Cocoon* movies and *Roger Rabbit* and it was a great time up there, *Witches Of Eastwick*, but I was always gonna be "Little Jenny the janitor who's now a coordinator, isn't that cute." I felt like I needed to go and spread my wings, so I moved to LA and started working at visual effects companies in LA and I think that I've worked at most every visual effects company that's ever been in existence. And I need to say that's not because I can't hold a job, it's more the nature of the work. It's a very nomadic kind of business.

36:01 Debra Schwartz: So, a coordinator. How do you go from being a janitor to a coordinator? And what is a coordinator? What does that mean?

36:06 Jenny Fulle: My trajectory was night-time janitor to day-time janitor, to mail room, to shipping and receiving, to production assistant at ILM, and then to coordinator. It's basically making sure that everybody's getting to screenings that they need to be at, and making sure that — a single visual effects shot might have had five different departments back then who need to touch it. So, it's making sure that everything's flowing the way that it needs to flow to get it done on time, making sure everything gets done on time and that sort of thing.

36:43 Debra Schwartz: And how do you segue into special effects from there? Was that your particular interest?

36:46 Jenny Fulle: What I liked about it was the chaos management portion of it. I wasn't one of those kids who saw a Ray Harryhausen movie when I was young and

² Industrial Light & Magic.—Editor.

thought, “Wow, that’s what I wanna do.” But when I became a PA and then a coordinator, just the energy that’s in visual effects and filmmaking in general, I learned that I’m actually really good at chaos management. I’m really good at kind of setting up a box for everybody to play in and then managing the frenetic energy that’s going on inside of that box.

37:23 Debra Schwartz: You mentioned that your early experiences where you stay calm and carry on, that the skills you honed going through the legal action and so on, helped you. And I’m assuming that you mean in this case as well. It was preparation for being calm in the middle of chaos. Is that a correct assumption?

37:48 Jenny Fulle: Yeah. I don’t know that I started out calm in the middle of the chaos, but it definitely came over time. I love actually just being able to take a hodgepodge of stuff and try to make sense of it, and bring organization to everybody and let them do their creative jobs.

38:08 Debra Schwartz: So, how about a list of some of the films you’ve worked on?

38:11 Jenny Fulle: It’s a long list. Most recently, I did the *Ted* films. I spent 11 years at Sony as Executive Vice President of Production for the Visual Effects and Animation division. And over there we did a lot of tent-pole films. We did the first three *Spiderman* movies and we did a couple of the *Matrix* movies. We did some groundbreaking stuff in *Stuart Little* and also we were one of the first places to successfully manage visual effects and animation, so we opened an animation division and did *Surf’s Up* and *Open Season*. It’s a long list of films, I probably have touched 30 to 50 films over the course of my career.

38:58 Debra Schwartz: And we being? Your company?

39:00 Jenny Fulle: I’m sorry, did I not say? I meant I. Certainly, probably a good 20, 25 while I was at Sony and then probably another 20 or 25 outside of Sony that I’ve worked on in the capacity of either running production at a facility or as a visual effects producer for the show specifically.

39:19 Debra Schwartz: But now you are semi-retired?

39:25 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, I would call myself that. I had a company for the last eight years that was doing visual effects. Kind of management, I would call it. We were just a production entity that could manage visual effects for shows. And we developed some software in there somewhere and I sold some of that IP to Technicolor recently, and was doing consulting for them. My hope is that when Wyatt graduates next year from high school and goes off to college that I can be done. Or be almost done.

39:58 Debra Schwartz: And your company’s name is?

40:01 Jenny Fulle: It’s the Creative Cartel.

40:03 Debra Schwartz: Creative Cartel. When you look back, starting from when you were a kid to everything that you've become today, do you ever think you could've done things differently? Do you ever wish things had worked out differently?

40:25 Jenny Fulle: I was actually thinking about that recently, and absolutely not. When any door closes another one opens, and so I think by having regrets and wishing that I'd done things differently or that things had turned out differently would be to say that I'm not happy with where my life is today and I'm extremely happy with where my life is today. I have a wonderful wife now, we've been together for 10 years, and I have a beautiful son who's sweet and compassionate and funny and smart. I have a nice house, a nice life, I've had a great career. I don't know how I could possibly have any regrets.

41:04 Debra Schwartz: And your wife's name is?

41:06 Jenny Fulle: Her name is Loree.

41:08 Debra Schwartz: Loree, yes, a delightful woman, she was there for your presentation for the panel discussion.

41:13 Jenny Fulle: Any regrets that I might've had were before I met Loree, and if I had done things differently at that point it might not have taken me to that relationship, which has been the most amazing relationship of my life.

41:25 Debra Schwartz: What would you say to somebody who might be facing some kind — let's imagine you're talking to your younger self when you were going through it. What tips could you offer? What words of support? What would you say to that younger person, if you could, to help you get through it?

41:45 Jenny Fulle: I think because of the whole Little League experience and getting that thick skin, and you know, my mom was very young, and then when my brother was born when I was 12, I feel I was really — I was a bit of a wild teenager, I will admit. And I was left a bit on my own, I feel. There was a lot of insecurity that I developed walls to protect myself from having to feel. I would try and love myself a little bit more when I was younger, I would try and tell myself to love myself a little bit more. Not be so worried about being vulnerable with people, and maybe not trying to, not feeling those feelings so much.

42:38 Debra Schwartz: Do you think your sexual identity played a large part in your —

42:44 Jenny Fulle: Oh, for sure. I was born this way, but it was in the '70s and it wasn't as easy to come out then. And there was, on top of the stigma that I might have had from doing the Little League, there was also, "I don't feel the same as everybody else inside for reasons I can't even talk about, maybe I don't even know. Why don't I wanna play horsies in the field? I don't. I wanna play French Connection with my friend

Wendy,” who’s a lesbian today too. You feel different and you don’t know why at that point, until you start understanding sexuality and those feelings become something a little more tangible.

43:30 Debra Schwartz: In your glamorous career in the film business —

43:33 Jenny Fulle: Oh, yeah. [chuckles] So glamorous.

43:35 Debra Schwartz: Does anybody know about — had it ever come up? Did anybody make the association about, “You are the famous Jenny Fulle who changed baseball as a child?”

43:48 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, I don’t talk about it that much. I will tell people if it comes up. It’s certainly not something I hide by any means, but I’d also don’t wanna be a bragger. But definitely people know and they’re — not often, but when somebody realizes it or hears it, they’ll be like, “Oh, my God, I didn’t know that was you. I remember when that was happening.” “And, “That’s so neat, my daughter plays,” and that sort of thing.

44:11 Debra Schwartz: How about your son? What’s your son say about the whole thing? Because he is now old enough. He was there for your plaque unveiling.

44:23 Jenny Fulle: Yes, he was.

44:23 Debra Schwartz: He was there for opening day. I’m sorry he couldn’t come to the First Wednesday presentation.

44:30 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, the pesky junior year of high school really gets in the way of things for him. I know that he’s proud and certainly when he was young, I know that he was proud and I know that he was proud opening weekend because he’s a teenager now. He’s not very warm and cuddly. He’s very independent, and everything I do is stupid, but when we were walking after we rode in the parade, which he said he wasn’t gonna do, and he did that, rode in the truck with us, the Mayor and Wyatt and I, and I think the woman, I forget her name, who heads Parks and Rec now, afterwards we were standing and people were talking to me and reporters were talking to me and he was standing there with his arm around me. I know he’s proud. I never get his arm around me anymore, so I knew that he wanted to be seen as with me. It was very sweet.

45:22 Debra Schwartz: That’s golden for a mother.

45:23 Jenny Fulle: Yes, it is. Yes, it is. At 17 it’s very golden.

45:28 Debra Schwartz: Did you ever have the opportunity to talk with your stepfather and your mother later in life to reminisce and discuss the event?

45:38 Jenny Fulle: Which event? You mean, in general?

45:39 Debra Schwartz: The whole legal event with the Little League.

45:42 Jenny Fulle: Yeah, not so much my stepdad, but with my mom. Yeah, we've talked about it before and she's the one who has told me about the calls and the letters and things like that that were a little bit scary, and that she's told me that she was actually fearful during that time, so we've talked about it, and she, of course, is very proud. I saved her a copy of the *Marin IJ* that had the girls and I throwing our hats up.

46:08 Debra Schwartz: Oh, she's still around. That's great.

46:10 Jenny Fulle: Oh, yeah. She's close by.

46:14 Debra Schwartz: She is in LA?

46:16 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

46:16 Debra Schwartz: Oh, I see. Well, this has been quite a story. It really has. It's been so wonderful to actually get your perspective. Is there anything we haven't talked about that we wish, you wish we could include in this discussion?

46:31 Jenny Fulle: Debra, I think you were thorough and covered it all with these questions.

46:38 Debra Schwartz: Well, let me think if I can think of one last thought. I guess it's about fate. I guess that, it's an interesting discussion, I think, about this of the events that happen to people and why that person and why this person, but the thing I'm going to make a comment on, and I'd love your opinion about, is that it seems to me in hearing your story that you just had a passion for something. That you loved something. And you loved to play and you wanted to play and that passion propelled you to unknown territories.

47:29 Jenny Fulle: Yes.

47:34 Debra Schwartz: In the conclusion of this interview, I would say that, if I was to add one thing to your introduction, I would describe you as a passionate person.

47:52 Jenny Fulle: I am a passionate person. When I latch on to something, for better or for worse, getting it away for me is like trying to pry it from my cold, dead hands.
[laughs]

48:06 Debra Schwartz: Passion is a powerful force.

48:08 Jenny Fulle: It is. For good and for evil.

48:12 Debra Schwartz: Yes. Well, Jenny, I think that just about does it. Although, before this interview I asked if we might be able to add a little musical.

48:22 Jenny Fulle: Oh, my gosh.

48:22 Debra Schwartz: Come on, are we going to be able to do it?

48:24 Jenny Fulle: Okay, I'll do it.

48:26 Debra Schwartz: Okay, we're going to do it because if not now, when? Right?

48:30 Jenny Fulle: I'll start it in my tune. My key, okay?

48:34 Debra Schwartz: Okay, and I'm going to sing really loud, all right?

48:36 Jenny Fulle: Okay, good. So you'll drown me out? [chuckles]

48:38 Jenny Fulle: Okay, you start.

48:40 Debra Schwartz and Jenny Fulle: Take me out to the ball game, take me out to the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and crackerjack, I don't care if I ever get back. Let me root, root, root for the home team. If they don't win it's a shame. For it's one, two, three strikes, you're out at the old ball game.

49:14 Jenny Fulle: Wow, we suck! [laughs] We suck.

49:18 Debra Schwartz: We may not have hit that one out of the park, but you sure hit a lot of other ones out of the park.

49:22 Jenny Fulle: That sounded like a strike out to me.

49:24 Debra Schwartz: Hey, a song is a song.

49:26 Jenny Fulle: But at least we went down swinging. [laughs]

49:30 Debra Schwartz: Perfect.

49:31 Jenny Fulle: All right.

49:32 Debra Schwartz: Thanks, Jenny.

49:33 Jenny Fulle: Okay, Debra