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**Oral History Interview with Glorianne Perrier**  
**May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994**  
**Madeleine Giguère, Marie Larendeau, Interviewers**

**Madeleine Giguère:** This is an interview with Glorianne Perrier at the Franco American Reading Room on May 24, 1994. Would you tell us about yourself?

**Glorianne Perrier:** I was born in Lewiston and my first 21 years were in spent in Lewiston. I was in sports but I never thought it would get me to real big time sports.

**MG:** Did you play when you were in school here?

**GP:** When I was in grammar school, Holy Cross did not have sports for women. High School, for some reason, I did not want to go into sports, I don't know why; most likely they did not have baseball, which I wanted to play. When I got a study hall, instead, I would go and study – but not 'cause I was studious, I can tell you!

My sport really started in Washington D.C. I went there in 1951 during the Korean War. About 1955, I was working at the Pentagon with the army with the signal corps. They asked me if I would start a softball team; I did, we did very, very well. In fact, we were the only team, and we were not very good, they used to call me the one-man team. I would be the pitcher, and if they would hit either to the right or left of me, I would say "my ball" 'cause I did not trust the girls that were playing with me 'cause they were not so good.

My sport started in softball; I got in real professional athletics when I went and bowled. A man came over and asked me if I would substitute this week.

I said, "Bowling?"

He asked, "Did you ever bowl?"

I said, "No, I never bowled in my life."

[He said,] "Well, it's free." So I was interested. So when I went there, Frank Havens, who had won a silver in 1948 [C-1, 10,000m] and a gold in canoeing in 1952 [C-1, 10,000m], was there.

**MG:** Bowling?

**GP:** Bowling – they noticed me 'cause my right arm was extremely good. All my life, when I was young, I used to play baseball, was the pitcher, even on a men's team. So my right arm was extremely strong,

not the big balls but the small balls, what is called duck pins, which is a little bigger than a soft ball. Instead of rolling it I would pitch in a few inches before in front of the pins, and that would make a real good whack. It would sometimes split the pins sometimes and the pins would bounce to the other alley. I think that is why they stopped having pin boys because I started to bowl.

All the pins boys would come up and say, "You can't do that, you can't do that!"

The manager would come up and say, "You can't do that!"

I said, "What do you mean, I can't do that? I pay. Take a walk with me around here. See on the side of the bowling alley? See all these indentations in the floor here? They all throw here!" Let me see your regulation, [let me] see if you can't pitch it, or if there is a limit of where you can put it on the ground." He did not throw me out and I won my case. But that is where Mr. Haven saw me.

Mr. Haven said, "Would you be interested in canoeing?" Canoeing? I had never been in a boat in my life, at that moment; never been in a big boat; [never been in] a small boat, and was not interested. He persisted and since bowling, being a substitute, was free, I was bowling often. He finally won me out in the spring and asked me to come to the [Washington Canoe] Club.

When I went to the club, in Washington D.C., right close to the White House, right on the Potomac River, Key Bridge, near Georgetown University, Georgetown University is on a hill, this is on the river, near the Kennedy memorial. I did not want to but after going to church I could not lie, so he called me up and said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Nothing."

So he got me in a double instead of a single, he got me in a double. He paddled in front of me – it's tandem – [and said,] "Just hold the blade as a double blade, just hold the blade and skim the water, it will give you a little balance, and I will do the paddling," which he did and we were gone about half an hour.

"Now I am going to put you in single." He put the boat in the water. As I put one foot in the boat, I went into the water. That kind of woke me up and made me a little mad. He said, "See that little girl over there? She is about 14 or 15 years old paddling as if the river was her's; standing up in the boat."

"If she can paddle why can't I?" [I thought]. I kept trying and they counted 21 times that I fell into the water in front of the dock. I went home without paddling any. They thought I would never come back, but I did. This was perhaps March or April, 1959. I keep on coming. He asked if I was going to keep on going. I said, "Well, I don't live far so I did." I kept going, and going, and going.

All of a sudden – this is about June, the start of the racing season - one day, it's Sunday, [Haven asked,] "Going to come with us to Philadelphia for the first race?"

I said, "Not me, I can't even stay in the boat!"

He says, "No, I want you to see how it's raced," so I did. When I went over there – this was the fourth or fifth race – he come over to me and says, "Glo, we want to win this trophy today but we need points. Here comes the women's races now. " There were more men and very few women races. He says "There are only two girls in that race, but they give 5 points for number one, three points for number two, [and] 1 point for number three. We would like for you to just stand, stay up, in the boat and you are going to be given one point and it's going to help us win the trophy."

I said, "Oh no, oh no, oh no!" To make the story short, I flipped in the river before the race started.

The speed boat came over and said, "We will put you back in the boat."

I said, "Get out of here!" I did not race.

Here comes a few more races, and he says, "Oh Glo, if we can get that point in the doubles..."

I said, "Doubles?"

He said, "Yes, you are going to be racing with my wife and she will keep you up. All you have to stay in the boat." We made it. However, after the race, we were paddling back to the starting where all the people were, people were clapping for making that one point, [and] we flipped after the race. So that is how I started.

After this, a year later [1960], I was on the Olympic team in Rome.

**MG:** You paddled all winter?

**GP:** Yes, everyday.

In 1960, I went to Rome and it was right near the Pope's summer home. A lake called Lake Gandolfo. While I was there, I was using, a boat that was used in [the] 1956 [Olympics], but in 1960. They had come with a little slimmer boat, much faster, but I did not know that. I went to Rome with that boat. The Russian women who had won two gold medals that year – a single and double, there were only two races – were at the dock when our boats came in from the United States; we were uncrating it. There were two Russian women and their interpreter. She asked, "Do you have an alternate?"

I said, "Alternate what?"

She says, "A second boat."

"I don't have a second boat." The two girls started smiling 'cause they knew the boat was not fast enough for the 1960 Olympics. However, because I was extremely strong, they followed me when I would be in the boat paddling. They followed me for about a couple of days, two days. After that they knew I could not make it in that boat. I was eliminated real quick.

However the German Team, Ingrid Hartman, saw me, she won the silver medal. She was very sympathetic; for this was the first time the United States had women. They were really trying to get countries [to compete in women's kayaking]. Knowing I was living in Washington D.C., she says, "If you

invite for three months, I will come and will come and we'll try to pick [your team]; you should not be in a single. Here you are, 31 years old, you've never been in a boat, your balance, it takes a little monkey to paddle these boats 'cause they are narrow."

I told her to come. I only about 5 girls [in training] and she says, "Don't you have more girls than this?"

"Well, I'm just starting," [I replied].

She says, "They are young, how old are they?"

"This one, 12; this one, 12; this one, 14 or 15; this one, 21, but she does not want to paddle."

"Of all the five you have, the youngest 12 year old [Francine Fox]." I took her word for it and started to coach [the twelve year-old]. Fortunately, her mother did not mind for her to come because she lived close. So, she came to the club, then we started to train year round. What really made us was that I was at work all day and she was in school, high school at the time. In the afternoon she would train before I would come. I told her that I wanted her fresh, "So don't train after four o'clock. At four, just wait for me for five o'clock," and it was dark. We would jump in the boat, but see, it was dark, it would get dark, so we would train at night.

That is what made us a terrific team. In the doubles, you have to hit the water precisely. In the dark, my ears made it better. When our blades went into the water as one, we knew we were doing better and better. That made us a perfect team; even though I was stronger on the right, she compensated. She was very smart. She is a gym teacher in California [now]. The German girl really picked the right person for me, [Francine] turned out.

It has to be perfect. Just one sickness and it's over, you can't break a leg, you can't do anything, so I would have to stop her from diving into the river. I would say, "Don't run on the boards," because they could break and [we could] forget it. With an injury, you are out. It takes really four years. You have to really work. It worked for me in 5 years but I was in the Olympics before I was even ready [in 1960] and then four year later [1964] we went back in Tokyo.

It was unusual, I was 35 and she was 15 in Tokyo. I don't think they will duplicate it because up until then, even now, girls have to be at least 19 to race in the Nationals. The reason for this is because they have a lot of women and want to give them a little more time. They also told me, that it is their thought, that "You will ruin her."

I thought, "Physically?"

"No," they said, "mentally."

After you win when you are young, you have won a goal. You can not want to work the second or third time because it hurts and they do not want to experience that hurt [again]. It took me many years to get that out of them but that is what it was. So that will be a long time before they will be able to

duplicate it because they do not use women under 19, perhaps they do now. I'll have to ask the German because she goes to all those meetings to see if they will put women in the boats before the age of 19.

**MG:** Did you get new boats?

**GP:** Yes, in fact, here is a little side story too. The Germans' were the first boats to be made[of plastic] – up until then, all boats were made from veneer, from Denmark and Sweden. The Olympic boat would have to come from there because they were the best. I did not have the money. The Germans sent me plastic boats, in fact, I ordered about a hundred of them. K-1s and doubles. He made me a special one 'cause plastic tends to flex and veneer does not flex. [Plastic] is much faster, however. The good boat has always been with me. By flexing, it gives you more balance, which is exactly what is needed.

There is a lot of sideline there, too. A lot of people helped me. You know, it has cycles, the weather. For example, this year [1994] had no snow. In Washington DC, up until my time, 1960, they barely had any ice. In 1961 and 62, they noticed the Potomac would freeze two or three weeks. The navy invited us to train in their hull-testing basin which is close by in Maryland. We would go there, it is a building about a mile and a half and all they do is test hulls in boats on which is the fastest, which one would carry more weight, and so on. The scientists, when they knew we were the Olympic team – we were not good at it, but just because we were the Olympic team, it opened doors for us – they asked, "What can we do for you?"

We asked them questions. Because of my balance being so bad at the age of 31 – I was not a monkey - when I would start a race, I would have to make my paddles wide of the boat to keep me up. But it turned out when the scientists were testing, they said, "When a speedboat has a motor in the back, and it's stationary, and you turn the juice on, the boat does this, and the back end of the boat is dragging. However, the way you are paddling, it is not. You are making wide turns and not gaining by doing this. By going wide, you are not going as fast and the boat is not doing this so it's flatter and you gain very close to 36 inches."

The other [kayakers] knew they are putting all their muscle. It just turned out that [my technique] was perfect. Everything I was doing was dumb but it was correct for me! Every where I was going, anywhere – Canada, in Europe – they knew that my start was superior to anyone's. The first time I would go to a regatta, "Is would you teach me how to start?"

When I went to Russia, you want to be a coach, we will take you? They wanted me to stay with them to coach so I could coach their start.

**MG:** Weren't you coaching the American Team?

**GP:** I coached nine years after the Olympics because a little girl, Francine [Fox], got interested in getting married, so I knew that forget it, so I started to coach instead, I coached for nine years. I was very successful at coaching on the Olympic teams. However, I could not find someone who could win a medal. That is what my aim was, a medal. In those days we had to pay for everything. Today, they pay you.

**MG:** The American Olympic Committee?

**GP:** Yes, they pay you. They are really great now but not in those years.

Today in fact, if you win a gold [medal], you win, I think \$25,000 or \$15,000 or so on, or 25, 15 or 10, or 15, 10 and 5 for a gold, silver and [bronze]. At first I did not want to see that because I was an amateur and I wanted to stay amateur; I was proud of it. However, I see where it is so difficult to keep people in canoeing – not all sports, but in canoeing – is because there is no money to be made. If you are in baseball, you make money, basketball; you make money and so on...

**MG:** Or hockey.

**GP:** Yes, hockey. Buy certain sports like canoeing, hey, there is no money there. What they do is that they don't give you the money really, they give it to your organization and when you need to go to a race, you need it to fly to Europe to another race, [the organization] will pay all the expenses and that makes it so much easier. I bought an airplane in 1957, a small airplane [for] \$1,000. In 1960, to go to the Olympics – excuse me, 1962 – I had to sell it for another \$1,000 to make it. It was very, very difficult for me to...

So, that is how I really got into sports.

Sports are like your index finger and your middle finger; usually your index finger is always smaller than the middle finger and athletes are like that. Some athletes are like the middle finger is longer and stronger. The index finger is a little shorter. How can the index finger beat the middle finger? It hurts.

To explain this is this: when Francine and I, just before we started to paddle, in 1962, I said, "Francine, we have to break the two minute mark in 500 meters, we have to break the two minute mark but we are making a 2:06. We just can't win like this, okay? So let's try to make it at 2:02 by 1963 and 1:59 by 1964." And that is exactly what we did.

However, to win a medal takes, months and months and months; we would be timed all the time. We would time ourselves when nobody was around. One day would be 2:04, 2:03 and 2:02, 2:01. Then we would stay at 2:01, it was so difficult to break the 1:50 mark. All of a sudden we broke the two-minute mark but I noticed that I was trying so hard that right after the 500 meters mark, after the last stroke, I did not know where I was, it was just like unconscious, you are working so hard so it hurt there.

So you are an athlete, if you are attaining what you are aiming for, the 1:59, you know that you are in [contention for] the medal. You don't care about the hurt. You say, "Hey, let's try it again!" whereas some others will not want to experience it. This is where the difference is in athletes, good athletes. You can be a good athlete but you don't want to put like these two fingers. This one has the hurt to be able to do this. This one here might not want to hurt.

There is something else the scientist also thought up for us. In a seven-day week, athletes or no athletes, you are at your best three days of those seven days. There are four days that you are okay, but three days you are better than the other four. But they were never able to say that to me. Me, I was

racing on Saturday or Sunday, or both so I would like to get those three days on that week but they could never do that. The scientist said, "Glo, have you got a book or something that would include your training?"

I said, "Yes"

He was a mathematician. I gave him the book and it did not take but a month, he came back and said, "Glo, I found a lot of nice things in that book."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "You know, when you send your kids on the water?" I did not have any money so I would be on the shore and I would send about 10 or 15 kids in the water in the boats, I would stay on the shore and watch them come back to me, and I would time them.

My program was "The good Lord told me." It's not true, nobody told me to do this, but I was doing it and it just turned out to be correct. I would say to them – although I would not need to tell them because they would know – they would get out about a mile, then they would turn, about 3 of them (I had three watches). One stroke thrust - if you are using a double blade, one stroke is both sides of the boat – I would have them do 10 fast, 10 slow, 10 fast, 10 slow, 10 fast, 10 slow, three times. I would put [their times] in the book and put their name and the date and so on. Then one night I would have them race 250, that is 250 meters or 500 meters or 100 meters, whatever. I kept this for several years.

This is when the scientists said, "Do you know what happens when you do that, Glo?" He says that the boys and the girls both of them, if they do 10 [strokes] – those fast ones that you start – if they do 10 [strokes] under 10 [seconds] and you give them a 250 or 500 or 100 [meters], that is the best time they make. But when these same boys and girls, one night, will give you a 10.6 or 10.9 or 10.4 [seconds], [and] you give them a 100 [meters] their 100 is not as good."

See the key is that I would wait, go to a race, put all the kids on the water and then I would have them do tens. I would take all the girls and boys who were below 10 [seconds] or barely over 10 [seconds], I would race them in a single. They would win all the time. The ones that did not [finish in under 10 seconds], we would put them in the doubles or the four.

**MG:** So you would be selective.

**GP:** Yes. So it was a meeting where I learned a lot of things, lots of things.

Myself, I would be crewed by somebody else that was smarter than me – I was the dumbest, but everything I was doing for some reason, I was lucky. It takes luck; even racing in the Olympics and winning a medal is rough because the first 6 - everybody knows that - the first 6 best times, depending on the day that they have to race, could be any of those 6 to win a gold medal. You can out-beat [your opponents], depends on the day, a good day for you a bad day [for them]...

**[End of Side 1]**

**[Side Two]**

**GP:** I was 30 years old in 1959

**MG:** That's pretty later for a[n athlete]

**GP:** Yes, they usually start them very, very, young. They usually start the gold medalist in Germany, they start at the age of 9 years old in whitewater, if you know what I mean. The boat is wider and has more balance. In Europe, especially the communist countries – I spent some time in the communist countries, especially Romania when they spoke French; in Romania they have a lot of people speaking French – I would come and there was a, “Oh, Glo, come and see how we have new army recruits. Now we want to find out if some of them wants to join canoeing, Olympic canoeing”

Everybody has a chance in communist countries. “Hey, who want to go canoeing?” Ok, there is a purpose for that. So, they go into the military and they say, “Ok, what sport are you interested in?” If [the recruit says] canoeing, “Oh, good! Okay, we will try you out.”

So they take you to club and so on. They have coaches and doctors and so on. He says, “I want you to know before you leave how we pick our single-bladers. That is the men's ; they go on their knees and they paddle a single blade; not women, they go into a kayak, not a canoe; for us, it's a kayak , the others is a canoe. The men they do both, they do the canoe and do the kayak. The women only do the kayak because it's very difficult on their knees.

I said, “Oh, I would like to see how you pick your team.” You know me, I had a hard time. We used to say, people would walk up to us and we would say, “Hey, would you like to plan to join our club, would you like to canoe?!”

Over there they would line them up in a gym. I went there and they said, “Watch how we do it. You line them up; this if for the men single blade.” He said, “We line them up, till they are all lined up.” He would say, “Put your arms up way up high...ok sit down now.” They sat down.

The coach would go there and they would say...point at one, “You, you, you, and you.”

“That is how you [pick your team?” I asked]

“Do you know what you are looking for?” he says

“No, what you are looking for?”

He says, “We are looking for baboons and they were correct.” Romania always won gold medals in the singles. It is because of the length of their arms and the torso; the length of their legs. It is just like a crow bar. Let me explain the crowbar. A small crow bar will do some work and a long crow bar will do much more work with less strain. That is exactly what they do.

There wasn't any iron curtain in athletics between us. It's like the Romanian, when I went to Toyoko - this was about 4 or 5 days after we had got there – he was on the podium and looking over the river. He

motioned to me to come up. I went up. He said "See those gold, silver, and bronze podium over there, you are going to be on there; which one I don't know."

I says "Ah, yeah!" I thought sixth place would be alright. The first 6 is really the best. I said, "what makes you think so?"

"Well," he said, "I have been timing you. We all time you." He said "What you can do in a 250, you can do in a 500. That is, there is about half a second to one second difference between the first 250 and the second 250 depending on how you race. We notice you race the first 250," which was true, "And the Germans, they race the second 250 so they are always one second faster than you. But," he says, "You know it depends on the day of the race; that second could be eliminated in the race." We don't know which one but you are going to be on the podium but we don't know what."

I said, "Yes, but I'm interested about the Russians," because the Russian that had beaten me, she was in the race again, [Antonia Seredina]. She was a nice friend; she was giving me all kinds of gifts and so on. We exchanged pictures and so on. She sent me pictures of how she trained and so on. It was very, very – there was no iron curtain at all between athletes. Anyway, I says –

**MG:** "Was that the time you were in Rome?"

**GP:** [No, this was] in '64, the best Olympic year, my year!

**MG:** Yes, your year, but when had she seen you before?

**GP:** In 1960, she won two golds.

**MG:** So she had seen you.

**GP:** Oh yes, she knew me. We had been corresponding now. She was going, not in the singles this time, because she was about 34 when she won the medal. She was about 38 at this time, the second time. They thought they would only give her a double to make sure. They had never lost; the Russians had never lost a canoe race, okay, in the women's program, never. I said, "I'm interested about the Germans."

They said, "Well, there is a second difference."

I said, "How about the Russians?"

"The Russians are wise this year, they are not training, they are not training; they are not training so that we can see them. They go way out there and we cannot tell if they are doing a specific 250 or what have you. We time them but we don't know what the distance is. We don't know about the Russians, they could be in the money too. We don't know but you are in the money. We made it a fact."

Now there is a side story to this. Since 1960, I went and raced there [in Europe], in 1962. Every time I would go to a race in Europe, they have a lot of different countries and they don't speak all the same language. In racing, it used to be, "Are you ready?" They would then have three second for the gun.

Over there, having nine people in the race and there might be 8 people not knowing English, as soon as they would say “Are”, they would be all gone and I was still there in the spot.

I thought, “Why can’t they not wait for the gun?” They would not wait for the gun. They would be gone at the word “are”. So Roserita - the one who beat me, who is my friend today, a wonderful person – she came over late at night, she woke me up the day before the final.

She says, “I have some good news. My coach, Mr. Werner, will be the starter tomorrow for the women’s race. You don’t have to worry, tonight they had a meeting and they said they will not start a race without the gun, so you can wait for the gun,” but they pulled fast one on them.

It was raining; it was a dark and dreary day. [The German team] were in lane 9, which is the furthest away from the water. We were number 4, ok. So, before starting the race, I told Francine, “Don’t start until the gun. “

So she’s only 15 years old, but she listens to me, but they said the word “are” and everybody was gone except for the Germans and us! So they called them back.

Now, this is where I lost the gold. The second time around, [the German team] must have timed their coach, so they knew exactly how long it would take him to start a race. So what they did is, when he said “Are you ready?” They knew exactly how to start before us without making a big showing..

But, the Russians saw that and the Russians protested. I thought I had won the race, anyway. But they were a second before us. However, the Russians noticed that they had started before the gun, because they came in fourth, and if they would have eliminated the Germans, who really cheated - to them it’s not cheating, but to us it is - that would have meant that the Germans would not have had a medal, I would have gotten the gold, Romania would have gotten second and the Russians would have gotten third, bronze.

That’s a lot of stories!

**MG:** What that a big disappointment?

**GP:** No, it wasn’t. Hey a bronze would have been great, fourth would have been great, fifth would have been great. That was like winning a gold, really, because they never, never, expected the United States, even the men [to win], let alone the women. Frank [Haven] was an exception; he was long distance, 10,000m. At that time [1964] there were no more 10,000 and it was a short sprint. Short sprint takes more training; not more training, but it’s a different race than the long distance.

No, for us winning a silver was really a gold because they never, never [expected] – hey, a 15 year-old and a 35 year old woman who had never been in a boat till the age of 30? That was spectacular. No, they came to us and you could tell they were very, very pleased that we had won.

They know me more there then in the United States really.

**MG:** Tell me, did the military service, the American military service, recruit people? I tell you what, I had a cousin who spent his two years – I guess it was 18 months – anyway he did whatever service he did in Europe, and it seems to me he was skiing in the winter and kayaking in the summer.

**GP:** Well, I had something to do with that, in canoeing. After the Olympics, Mr MacNamara [Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara?], was a sports person at grade 16 or 17 in the Pentagon, who controlled all of the sports in the military. Because I had done so well, and he was a friend of mine, he would say, “What do you need Glo?” and he would help me.

This was during Vietnam. He would say to me, “Hey Glo, I have some letters over here, would you like to read them?”

They were from different soldiers that would say, “I won a medal, I raced in New York,” or whatever or “I raced in Canoeing and I won a medal, always did well” and so on.

“You know this person?”

“No I don’t.”

“Do you think he can do that?”

“No he can’t because the time is not [right].” Because I knew the sports, the canoe sports, he relied on me because those sportsmen did not want to go to Vietnam.

One day he came and said, “Hey, I know a Polish guy, he joined the army and he says he knows canoeing.” I looked at his resume and it looked correct. He said he was not a champion but he had done clubs for racing and so on. Over there, you know, just club is like a national championship for us, very difficult to win there. There’s too many, yah, there is a lot.

So anyway, before going to Vietnam, they entered him into the Washington Canoe Club and I would train him for a year or so to see if I could make a champion out of him. He helped us with club trophies and stuff; not good enough for the Olympics but he was good enough to win in our little area.

**MG:** When you say we, what is the club you were in?

**GP:** Washington Canoe club. It’s about 100 years old. It’s on the Potomac [River] , right in front of Georgetown, under Key Bridge, It has been there – I bet you, pretty soon it’s going to be a century, 100 years [since 1904]. They would have floods, the floods would go to the second floor and the building would just stay there. It did not move; that building is made of huge wood, its wood but you should see how – oh, it’s amazing! The other clubs all floated down the river but that one keeps staying there.

**MG:** So, you are still associated with them?

**GP:** Oh yes, in fact my cousin – I went to Washington the other day. I stopped into Fairfax [Virginia] coming over here and I saw my Godchild. Her brother came over and says, “You know what? Last week,” he said, “I got a contract, Jack Brosius.”

I says, "What? I know him!"

"Yes, he mentioned something about the Washington Canoe Club. He says, 'Do you know a Glo?'"

Yes, in fact, he is the president of the club today. In fact, when in 1972 - no 1968 –they had the Olympics in Mexico. So I said, "Oh, Jack, my car won't make it to Mexico."

He says, "I just bought myself a truck, and if you want to drive my truck..." A brand new truck! Then the same fellow – I had a team and I wanted those boys and girls at the yacht club, where George Washington's farm is, Mt. Vernon; in fact, it's call Mt. Vernon Yacht Club – I used to coach over there and I wanted to take them on races, two weeks all together. So he loaned me the brand new truck that he just bought for himself, I did not know, he said, "Glo, you can have my van." We had 10 Kayaks on top, and eleven kids, 3 boys and 8 girls, went to Michigan and spent a week over there training and coaching. I then went to Canada, raced over there and they all won. It was wonderful.

Now they are old and have kids, they all write to me and say, "Glo, you've got to spend some time [with us] I want my kids to know you. "

That is wonderful, very nice. Around Christmas time it is pretty nice, they really send collages, yes, it's nice, it's nice. They don't forget, they really don't forget. Some of them will say, "Glo, that trip to Canada, those two weeks; I tell my kids that those were my best sports days of my life."

Yeah, it was really wonderful. They were a wonderful bunch.

**MG:** I'm sure Marie Larandeu perhaps has questions she wants to ask you

**Marie Larendeu:** After you got your medal, did they have any celebrations for you?

**GP:** Yes.

**ML:** Where?

**GP:** It was very nice, right after the race they had a float in front of everyone in n front of the stadium – in front of the bleachers, rather – and you would be presented your medals right on the float. Right after the float, I mean right after I got of the floats, we got back into our boats and went to shore. Of course, everybody was hugging us.

I picked up, that ah, that is another story – he was the coach of the Italian team and was Hungarian. He was the really the one that got me ready for that race. I picked him up just as though he was a pencil and then went to take a shower. Right after the shower I was sick as a dog, had to call a taxi and it took me to the hospital. They had a party that night and I did go to the party. It's because you know, after so many years of just training, training, training every day, every day, you think Olympic, you sleep Olympic, you eat Olympic and all of a sudden it's over, ok. The wind just comes out of you. I got really, really sick.

Then they had a party that night and let me tell you, it was us – the Germans, of course, had been winning for two years, the same team for two years – but us, they never thought the United States would ever get a medal. They really were pleased that we had won.

**ML:** Of course, we bought it to Madeleine, we still have the Life magazine that your picture was in. We have some of the photos that you send us and they are all here. I think that Madeline might be interested in getting more.

**MG:** What medal was it?

**GP:** Silver,

**ML:** Yes, we would like to get more photos of whatever you would like to send us.

**GP:** Show me what you have.

**MG:** Okay, we don't have very much, what we don't have is a real photograph, I don't think. I think that what we have is that, and we can work that up for reproduction. I'm sorry, I do have one. It was in the office. Those are the three. We don't have one right from the Olympics. That is just love and that is the boat. That is in Rome. That was an Olympian they call that.

Do you have other pictures that you would like to send us?

See these boats over here, yes, plastic, those are from Germany. The Germans made us the hard hull so that it was a little heavy but for me for my balance, it was perfect so that the boat would go faster in the water was without any weights.

He took only two [photographs]. Did they have the name them? I think that's the name, Porter, he took the pictures. He came one weekend and took us for lunch, he was really nice. He must have taken 2,000 pictures. Then he says, "Lord, we don't have the right ones!"

By another weekend, we had some more free food! He was really nice. He sent me all the pictures he took. I said, "You know if you want to do that; I know I'm not going to get any money out of this, but you know, what I want is your negatives for a picture of everything you took of me," and he did. He sent me all of the pictures.

**MG:** We would particularly like a negative of a competition, if you have one.

**GP:** You know what, I have the film NBC or CBS, NBC I guess, gave me the picture. I've got it on film.

**MG:** We could duplicate it you have it.

**GP:** You know what I would like to do is that one of these days when I get rich, is when I get rich, I would like to have all of my 8mm and 16 mm go into tapes instead, video tape.

**MG:** My cousins had all of their wedding pictures put on to a tape.

**GP:** In fact, just week I was in Alabama and I got a phone call, the guy says, “We are making a pictures from home movie pictures. Would you know of any of your people in canoeing who went to Olympics and haven taken pictures of racing? We would be very interested.” But we didn’t.

I do have the Olympic pictures from the NBC, the end of the race, From the start to the finish really. I don’t think I’ve got a still one. I have pictures of presenting the medal on a podium, of people how knew me – excuse me, did not even know me – from Germany, Japan. They sent me pictures they took from their camera.

**MG:** That would be nice too. I don’t know how much duplicating, putting it on video would cost but we could consider.

**GP:** This is, I was the one that I enjoy the most , this was key bridge, next to the club. This was the one that I liked the most of all the pictures, and this one was alright. But that is the one that shows canoeing at its best.

**ML:** at least we can say that we are very proud to know you and because you are a Franco American, we are especially proud. It was very nice of you to coming over .

**GP:** You really know that I did not want to do this, interview, I know you didn’t, It’s not that I don’t like to do this, not bragging or anything, but after the Olympics, they are after you at all times and they want magazine people. For instance, they would be obnoxious sometimes. They would come to the club, you know, they would feel your muscles and so on, and say, “Gee you are strong!”

I was strong as an ox, “Could you do some pushups, did you do some....” Because they wanted to get to sell this to be that have to do with athletic gear, you know what I mean? Oh gee, “Did you run?” and so on. Hey, I did not run and they didn’t get very much out of me. Didn’t run, didn’t do any calisthenics . All I did was canoeing. We were so far behind that we had to spend every moment in that boat.

Without being dumb, don’t get me going, I’m not a person who would have done well in college but unless it was anything to do with money, then I could have done very well for you. However, in school work I am not smart, ok, Everything I did in sport was automatic. After the Olympics they invited me to Jewishtown to race on weekends. They were good, they were pretty good, national. They wanted to find out if I was good at 50 meters, 100 meters, 250 – they knew I was short distance – 500 meters, very short. So they knew I would be better in a short sprint. So they would put me in different races. I would race and I could talk. Let’s say there was a 450, 440 and gee, I felt real good.

I was in front; I was with the front girl. Everybody was falling behind and I would start talking to them. It was because we train ourselves in boats like that. That’s how I was taught to train, to make it look to you, if you are my opponent, “Hey, I’m not even using any effort!”

So, ok , and they are killing themselves. Really, mentally, it breaks them down. I was born with, my father would say that I was born with that, I didn’t have to think, it was automatic. Don’t get me wrong, I was not smart, it was just, something just told me, “Hey do this.”

For instance, when I was racing against, there was about a 150 boys going to high school. They would be the best rowers in the country that would be racing in England every year. I would jog a little bit you know, I would follow them but I knew it was two miles where they would turn. I would say to myself, well if I jog just enough, fast enough, pass a few, pass a few, pass a few, I can be the first one at the end, and I would beat. The boys kept looking behind, looking behind to see if I....and I was like a bum, holes in my shoes, holes in my clothes and so on. I looked like a bum but what I am trying to say is that I would be going, let's say I'm going against you, you are a good runner, ok? I notice in a two mile race, you will have bad areas and good areas.

Your heart pumps right fast but as soon as you pant, that this is where I catch them. When I hear them pant, my breathing is good. Sometime we are both at the same pace, then I don't do nothing. All of a sudden I catch them panting, gee I'm breathing good. This is when I pass them really quick. You know what I mean. There was something in me that told me all these tricks. I was really blessed to be an athlete really.

I wished Lewiston High School would have , when I didn't, cause it's my fault that I didn't go for sports in Lewiston High School.

**MG:** I'm sure they had girls' basketball teams. "

**GP:** Yes, but I never wanted to play in something like that. I never wanted to play because I never thought of Olympics. I thought of Olympics were just swimming, ice skating, so I did not know that they had all this. This wasn't me.

**MG:** Television has taught us all of a lot of, I think in terms of that; the coverage has been pretty good.

**GP:** I do have a film of me. NBC came in Seoul, did you see that one? My mother was sick and I just did not want to do that one. They gave me that one.

**MG:** Well, at any rate, we thank you very much for coming.

**GP:** You're welcome; I thought I would come over for five minutes!

**[END]**