

1 **Judith Gal-Ezer**
2 **The Open University of Israel**
3 **March 9, 2007**
4 **Covington, Kentucky, USA**
5 **Interviewed by Barbara Boucher Owens**

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8 **B: This is an interview with Judith Gal-Ezer of the Open University of Israel on**
9 **the 9th of March, [2007] at Covington, Kentucky. It is part of the Computer**
10 **Educators Oral History Project. It is being conducted Barbara Boucher Owens.**

11

12 **Did I say your name right, Judith? Would you say it for us so it gets in here**
13 **correctly, English and Hebrew, if you like?**

14

15 J: All right. In Hebrew it is {says name in Hebrew} and in English it is Judith Gal-
16 Ezer.

17

18 **B: Thank you very much. And it is a pleasure to have you with us this**
19 **afternoon and to talk to us a little but about thinking way, way, way back.. Let's**
20 **talk about your parents' education. Did your parents have college degrees?**

21

22 J: No, Unfortunately my parents did not have any college degrees. They were born
23 both of them in Berlin and had to flee from Germany in 1939. Actually, my father left in
24 1938 and my mother a year later. They weren't my parents, then, of course. They were
25 teenagers at that time. They came to Israel then. Their parents and siblings and other
26 members of the family were taken to the concentration camps and never came back. My
27 parents had to struggle to lead a decent life in Israel. My father was a carpenter. Right
28 from the beginning he had to work for his living. My mother was younger. My father
29 was 19 years old and my mother was about 14 years old. She went to secretaries' school
30 and meant to become a secretary. But then when they finally dated first and later got
31 married, my father thought that "It's appropriate for a woman to stay at home and not to
32 work at all." So she became a housewife. And he went on with his carpenter work. They
33 didn't have any college, any formal education.

34

35 **B: So neither of your parents were in computers or science or anything like**
36 **that?**

37

38 J: No. No. Not at all.

39

40 **B: Were you a good student when you were in school?**

41

42 J: Yes, a very, very good student. I must say.

43

44 **B: You should see her eyes light up.**

45

46 J: Yes. I loved learning right from the beginning. I really loved it. I loved doing
47 my homework. Unbelievable, but I really loved it. And I was a very good student. I met
48 my elementary school teacher, my seventh and eighth grades elementary teacher, a few
49 weeks ago, she told me – I don't think I ever knew it -- that I was the first in Israel in the
50 exam that we had to take when graduating elementary school. I don't think I ever knew
51 that; I don't think she ever told us.

52

53 **B: So you were a good student. Did you take courses in mathematics and**
54 **science that prepared you for college studies? I think you told us that.**

55

56 J: Yes, in high school, I elected the class that put emphasis on mathematics and
57 physics and chemistry, but more physics than chemistry. We had five classes – two
58 humanities, one was biology oriented, one was more social studies oriented and one was
59 the math and physics class. We were 20 boys and four girls in our class. This was my
60 choice. I loved mathematics from the beginning. I think I was pretty good in
61 mathematics, physics, too but more mathematics than physics.

62 4:28

63 **B: Could you explain a little bit about the high school curriculum. You didn't**
64 **take any humanities? You chose to only take math and physics. Is that how it**
65 **works?**

66

67 G: No, we had humanities and some social studies as well, and the Bible class and
68 Hebrew studies and English studies, of course. But the emphasis was on mathematics
69 and physics.

70

71 **. B: Ok, I understand. Did you have any brothers or sisters who went on to**
72 **college or professions?**

73

74 J: Yes, I have one brother who is an engineer, aeronautics engineer (I forgot the
75 word).

76

77 **B: Just one brother?**

78

79 J: Just one brother.

80

81 **B: Were you given the same educational opportunities that your brother had?**

82

83 J: Maybe, the same opportunities.--no, not even the same opportunities. There was
84 definitely not the same support. When I graduated elementary school my father thought
85 that I should go out working, or learn something like becoming a secretary or whatever.
86 Why should I go to high school, if I was going to become a housewife anyway? This was
87 his attitude. He never believed it when I told him after years that this is what he said, but
88 this is really what he said. [Both laugh.] I have to confess, that one reason why he
89 thought so, might be the fact that our socio-economic situation wasn't so good. My
90 parents didn't have the money to send me to high school – it was pretty expensive. This
91 might be one of the reasons, I must say. But there was also this philosophy that I'm a girl

92 and I should stay at home. So I asked one of my elementary school teachers, my music
93 teacher to come home and convince my father that I should go to high school, because I
94 was a very good student. Finally I joined high school. For my brother it was obvious that
95 he should go to high school and later to the Technion, the Technical Institution of Israel.
96 It wasn't at all obvious that I should pursue higher education.

97

98 **B: Were there teachers that particularly in your early life that inspired you to**
99 **pursue this mathematics, physics career path?**

100

101 J: Yes, I believe there were two teachers that inspired me. One was the teacher of
102 my seventh and eighth grade in elementary school. She was a wonderful teacher; she
103 taught us mathematics, literature and physics,(the physics we studied then). I loved the
104 way she taught us mathematics. We had two groups in mathematics. One was the
105 intensive group. I participated in the intensive group and she was really very good. I
106 knew that this is what I want to do. This is what I am going to do, to do mathematics.
107 And then there was the teacher in high school in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades of high
108 school, he was also very, very good. He taught us much more than he had to teach, to
109 learn for the end exams, the matriculation exams. I was sure that I am going to pursue
110 math studies at the university.

111 8:20

112 **B: How did you choose? When you decided you were going to university? You**
113 **were supposed to go to secretarial school. How did it happen that you went to**
114 **college and how did you choose the undergraduate institution that you went to.**

115

116 J: I was very determined to pursue higher education so I made it. Actually, I wanted
117 to join the Weizmann Institute, I can't say I'm sorry I didn't, but this was my dream.
118 Now I remember, while in high school, being a teenager I read the book of Madame
119 Curie. This inspired me a lot. Oh, I should have mentioned that yesterday. Yes, I
120 dreamt of being Madame Curie. So I thought I would join Weizmann Institute, but then
121 they didn't have undergraduate studies, they only had graduate studies. So I chose the
122 Tel Aviv University. I lived in Tel Aviv, and this was the most convenient choice They
123 offered applied mathematics so I chose applied mathematics.

124

125 **B: Was the university education free in Israel?**

126

127 J: No, not at all. We had to pay. I also learned the accordion. Do you know the
128 accordion? I was pretty good in this, too. I loved this, too. But I had to choose. When I
129 got 18 I had to choose: Am I going to become a musician or a mathematician. So I chose
130 mathematics. But, I taught the accordion, and so I earned the money I paid for my
131 studies.

132

133 **B: How interesting. Well, you've said that you came to school knowing what**
134 **you wanted to major in, then why or how did you decide to go on? Did you do that**
135 **right away? You might tell me a little but about your undergraduate experience**
136 **before you tell me more.**

137

138 J: Well it was very difficult. It was very difficult. It was very different from high
139 school. Despite the fact I was a very good student in high school, I found it very difficult
140 in university. I can't say that I was the best in university, not at all. The first year was
141 difficult. Calculus, no calculus was ok, but linear algebra is the course I remember to be
142 most difficult. The logic course was quite difficult. But then this was the first year. The
143 second and third were much better. We in Israel have to join the army. I went on the
144 academic reserve, so that I could study first and join the army later. I joined the army
145 right after graduating and went to the computer unit. That started my relations with
146 computers.

147 12:00

148 When I graduated almost at the same time, oh, let me turn to some personal details. I
149 knew my husband ever since elementary school. We were not in the same class, but in
150 parallel classes, however there was no connection between us. But, later we were in the
151 same class in high school and then we both joined the academic reserve, he chose to
152 study physics at Tel Aviv University. In applied mathematics we had many physics
153 courses as well, so we had many courses together, and then our friendship started. When
154 we graduated and as I said, he was also in the academic reserve. He also joined the army.
155 No, actually he joined the master's program and joined the army one year later. By then
156 we had already decided to get married. So I again had to earn some money for our living
157 because he was still a student of the master's program and I was in the army, neither he
158 nor I could work. (We don't get any decent salary while in the army) so I asked - I
159 mentioned my colleague - Gideon Zwas, who was also my teacher and a very good
160 friend. if I could be a TA or something so that I can earn some money. He said I can do
161 that; and I he promised to see to it, but I should enroll to a master's program first. So I
162 enrolled in a mathematics program while being in the army. I don't know if it is allowed
163 but anyway, I did it.

164 13:37

165 **B: You think anybody listening to this is going to come after you, do you?**

166

167 J: That was years ago.....

168 I actually continued with my master's program and my instructor of the master's thesis
169 then said: I understand that you are going on to the doctorate. I said, yes of course. That
170 is how I went on to the doctorate program in seismology. It was still not anything to do
171 with computers. I worked in programming in the army. COBOL. Yes. And while doing
172 the doctorate - it was in seismology, I wrote these huge programs in FORTRAN and how
173 were they called? [Makes a rectangle with her hands]

174

175 **B: punch cards**

176

177 J: Punch cards. Yes. I think for most of the time during my doctorate I went down
178 to the computer laboratory and put punch cards on the machine and waited the night for
179 the output and so on, this was kind of a beginning.

180

181 **B: Let's go back and reflect a little bit on this. When you were in high school it**
182 **was your story you tell about there being 20 boys and four girls. You haven't said**

183 **anything about the ratio in you classes when you were studying applied**
184 **mathematics at Tel Aviv. Do you remember?**

185
186 J: It wasn't so bad, the ratio wasn't so bad, but the girls were always less than the
187 boys. It is hard to remember now.

188
189 **B: So it wasn't important?**

190
191 J: Maybe something 30% of.. 30%. Sometimes we were mixed classes with those
192 who study statistics. The girls were more than in physics and math, of course.

193
194 **B: So you went on to the doctorate. You were out of the army?**

195
196 J: I was out of the army. By then I had two girls already.

197
198 **B: Oh!**

199
200 J: [laughs]

201
202 **B: Working on a master's, in the army and having two babies!**

203
204 J: That's true, yep.

205
206 **B: Busy lady.**

207
208 J: When I finished my doctorate I gave birth to my son.

209
210 **B: So you are saying that on your doctorate you studied something., that**
211 **seismology wasn't what you did on your master's**

212
213 J: It was close; it was wave propagation in my master's program.

214
215 **B: Did you enjoy the research that you did for your doctorate?**

216
217 J: I enjoyed the research. My instructor was a very tough, very tense person. It was
218 not so easy to work with him. I learned from him a lot though. My days were pretty
219 tough and not always very pleasant. This is the truth. So I don't see this period as very
220 enjoyable.

221
222 **B: Something you had to do?**

223
224 J: I wanted to do it. I wanted to make the progress; I wanted to get the PhD. It was
225 less enjoyable than the years before and the years after.

226
227 **B: How many years did it feel like you were working on this dissertation?**

228

229 J: It was all in all about 5 years that I began and until the PhD.

230

231 **B: And then how did your life go after you got your PhD?**

232

233 J: It was something like the third or fourth year of the PhD, when Professor
234 Bruckheimer, who, as far as I know, was one of the founders of the Open University in
235 Great Britain, gave a colloquium lecture at the Tel Aviv University. I came home and I
236 told my husband that if there would be such an institution in Israel, there is where I want
237 to be. Then something like one or two years later, the Open University was established.
238 Some of my colleagues from Tel Aviv University, two physicists, and one colleague who
239 studied mathematics with me joined the Open University as TAs, they were not faculty
240 yet, and they told me to come and join them. I said well, I can't do everything. I have to
241 finish my doctorate first and then I join the Open University. This is how it was. I
242 graduated my doctorate program and joined the Open University and there I am ever
243 since. And I really love this place.

244

245 **B: She is smiling very broadly. She loves this place. And what about the idea of**
246 **the Open University appealed to you so that you came home after that talk and said**
247 **that's what I want to do?**

248

249 J: While being at Tel Aviv I was also teaching. I taught various classes, but I very
250 much liked the engineering classes. I taught math, numerical analysis, differential
251 equations, and complex function and that's it I think. I loved it; I really loved it. I felt
252 that I really taught mathematics to the engineers who were not interested at all. They
253 wanted the questions, the solutions which should be a number and that's it, or a recipe or
254 something and that's it. I didn't like it. I didn't want it to be this way, so I tried to do my
255 best to teach them the beauty of mathematics. Besides, it was applied mathematics is not
256 pure mathematics, but I thought there is the beauty and to really made them love it and I
257 think I succeeded. And so I thought teaching... I went back actually to what I wanted to
258 do in high school, elementary school, to be a teacher. And I felt that this is what I
259 should do. And the Open University puts emphasis on teaching, great emphasis on
260 teaching. It is a distance education institution and the faculty at the Open University have
261 to prepare the materials, the textbooks. I felt that I could do something to contribute and
262 this is what I want to do. Shall I go on?

263

264 **B: If you want to. But was there somebody who was a mentor who supported**
265 **this move into education?**

266

267 J: There was my teacher and then colleague Gideon Zwas who was a great teacher.

268

269 **B: Can you spell that?**

270

271 J: Gideon Zwas Zed-W-A-S. He was a great teacher. We were also friends. After
272 years we did research together and he really inspired me. He taught me how to prepare a
273 lesson, how to motivate the students. How to devote – actually he devoted his life to

274 teaching his students and how important it is, so he supported my desire to become a
275 teacher.

276 22:22

277

278 **B: Your career has moved from certainly, no seismology anymore and**
279 **mathematics has been paired with computer science. Can you talk about how that**
280 **path developed?**

281

282 J: Yes. I can. When I started work at the Open University what I was really doing
283 then was preparing textbooks. I felt that I need something more, some additional thing to
284 do or to research, I felt I want to take advantage of the computer's potential and to
285 integrate it into the teaching of mathematics and to see how mathematics can be taught
286 better with more insight with the help of the computer. So I joined Gideon Zwas who was
287 doing similar work in the past. There was another colleague, Shlomo Breuer, they wrote
288 a book: The Mathematical Laboratory or something like this, and that is why I asked him
289 if he was willing to work with me on such issues and he agreed. We worked from 87 to
290 2000, thirteen years together; we met once a week.. I was very busy at the Open
291 University and he was very busy at Tel Aviv University, so we met once a week
292 researching the integration of computer into mathematics teaching providing ways to
293 teach mathematics without the prerequisites usually needed.

294

295 Then I felt that something was missing with my computer education, computer science
296 education. I know how to use a computer but I don't know this science, what are the
297 foundations of this science. So I decided to take courses in computer science. I took
298 about ten courses, which are the core of computer science. At the same time at the Open
299 University, the president of the Open University decided to develop the computer science
300 undergraduate program and so I went into it. Then I started to develop computer science
301 courses. Not by myself; there were colleagues, but we were the ones who founded
302 computer science department at the Open University.

303 25:25

304 **B: If you have a teaching philosophy, you said you want to convey this love of**
305 **learning mathematics, and I assume now computer science to your students, what**
306 **drives you, what is your overall philosophy about doing this? Do you have one?**

307

308 J: I never thought of it as a philosophy. I think rigor is one of the things I would
309 center on, not give up, going into details, really understanding what you are teaching and
310 what you are learning.

311

312 **B: Has that changed you teaching style, your style of writing, in preparing these**
313 **materials over the years?**

314

315 J: I am not sure it has changed anything. I can't point at change; at this point I
316 changed. It was my philosophy ever since.

317

318 **B: What is the most favorite course you've developed of all the courses you've**
319 **taught?**

320

321 J: I think that automate and formal languages. Maybe numerical analysis was also
322 one of them.

323

324 **B: You must explain a little bit to me and the other listeners, about the way it**
325 **works in the Open University, but do you have contact with the individual students?**

326 27:07

327 J: Yes, I have contacts. But first the Open University as I said is a distance
328 education institution. The main element of the study method is written textbooks. We
329 used to develop textbooks in Hebrew, but the procedure for developing a textbook is very
330 intensive, very long. It takes 4, 5, or 6 years to develop a textbook. It starts with a
331 proposal which is sent to two or three referees outside the university, then every unit that
332 is written is sent to referees going back to the proposal writer and then the publishing
333 house comes into it and the editors. It takes a long time. In computer science we
334 couldn't afford this long time of development because after five years of course the
335 material is obsolete. So we base our courses on English textbooks, existing English
336 textbooks. Some of them we translated but it also took some time because you have to be
337 very pedantic in translating. So the more advanced courses we don't translate any more.
338 But we write study guides which are in Hebrew. Well, it is easier for us in Hebrew, and
339 of course for the students.

340

341 Students get home these course materials. They get assignments during the semester,
342 prescheduled assignments. We also offer tutorials which are not mandatory. The students
343 can take it in two modes: either a regular mode which is once in two or three weeks or in
344 intensive mode which is once a week. We force them, the only time we force the students
345 to come to a place is at the end of the semester to take the exam. We have about 50
346 centers all over the country. The tutorials are being conducted in the centers and so are
347 the exams.

348

349 What did you ask specifically?

350

351 **B: I was asking if you had contact with the individual students that were**
352 **studying the materials that you developed.**

353

354 J: We consult the students; we guide them, even before they are students, when they
355 are potential students. This is one way of contact with the student. I mean the faculty.
356 We have course coordinators and tutors. The tutors are those that meet the students on a
357 regular basis. The course coordinators meet them from time to time; also to some extent
358 on a regular base when they visit the centers. The faculty is more actually in the head
359 quarters of the university, and also once in a semester or twice visit the study centers.
360 We consult with the students. Now we have also a graduate program in computer science
361 and we instruct them in their thesis or final report projects they have to submit.

362

363 **B: Do you have a particular story, a teaching story that would, about any of the**
364 **classes, development, that you'd like to share?**

365

366 J: The only thing that pops into my mind is that I keep meeting students, former
367 students, either from the Open University or the Tel Aviv University and they remember
368 me and I am so happy! They are grateful, so that is something.
369

370 **B: There is a radical change in what you have been doing. I've noticed that**
371 **recently you have moved into intensive work with the high schools.**

372
373 J: Right.
374

375 **B: Would you like to talk about that because your first move was into the**
376 **graduate program after the undergraduate and now the other way.**

377
378 J: Actually, it isn't recently. It is now about 20 years I think, almost 19 or 18 years.
379 Well, way ago, ... it was 1988 1987 or '88 I can't really remember. There was in Israel
380 a committee, a professional committee of computer science they were designing a
381 computer science program for high schools. There was a computer science for high
382 school then implemented in Israel. However, there was no written material; there were
383 not real computer science teachers. The teachers were doing what they could do in class.
384 It wasn't very well established. So this other committee was nominated. I was not a
385 member of it then. I was asked by one of the members of the committee if I was ready to
386 prepare the first unit, of the first two units of such a program that was meant to be the
387 foundations of computer science. Why did he approach me – he worked in an institution
388 adjacent to the Open University, he knew me; he knew that I was involved in designing
389 syllabi at the Open University. So I believe that is why he chose me. I had no idea of
390 high school curriculum, not at all. By that time, David Harel, another colleague of mine
391 published a small book, the Foundation of Computer Science. Actually it was a radio
392 program that he gave once a week or so, and this came out as a little book. It was a
393 foundation of computer science and it was after or while I was taking the courses at Tel
394 Aviv University. But actually this book gave me the real notion of what computer
395 science is, and I thought I could use this book to design these two units of the high school
396 curriculum. I then called David Harel. I had never met him, maybe I had met him once
397 before, and I asked him if it was all right if I used his book (well, not to copy the book,
398 but as the foundation of this program) and he was very... he agreed of course. He was
399 very satisfied with it. I prepared this program and then somehow he also got involved.
400 We submitted it together to this committee and it was approved.

401 34:18

402 A year or two later, , the minister of education nominated a new committee, a quite new
403 committee, which I became a member of. This new committee, Amiram Yehudai was
404 chair, David Harel was a member, I was a member, from the Hebrew University Catriel
405 Beerli, three members of the ministry of education, and two computer science teachers
406 designed this new curriculum of computer science which is implemented until today.
407 This paved the way to research in computer science and I got into research in computer
408 science education.

409
410 **B: This is having knowledge of the talk you gave yesterday when you won the**
411 **Outstanding Computer Science Educator Award, you spoke about how you had**

412 **mentored essentially into computer science education, two of the outstanding**
413 **researchers in computer science education in Israel. I think that is a nice story.**
414

415 J: Yes. It is Moti Ben-Ari and David Ginat. The first one is David Ginat. Well, I
416 don't think it is a secret they both applied to the Open University. We didn't recruit any
417 faculty at the time. But in all the institutions in Israel, most of the institutions, there were
418 teams working on the high school curriculum program, they were actually writing the
419 materials. There were not enough computer science education researchers at the time,
420 actually there was no one. There was one mathematician, one theoretical mathematician
421 in the Technion who was involved preparing some of the material in LOGO then, but
422 actually there were no computer science education researchers at all. So when David
423 Ginat came to the Open University, I suggested that the science teaching department at
424 the Weizmann Institute, that he joins the team that can take part in preparing the material
425 for the high school curriculum. After a while, 2, 3, or 4 years, I really don't remember,
426 he left for the Tel Aviv University. I was on sabbatical at the Weizmann Institution for
427 that year right when he left or the last year he was there. They asked me if I know
428 anyone who would come to the Weizmann Institute and chair the group of computer
429 science research, computer science education research there, at that time Moti Ari came
430 to the Open University, Moti Ben-Ari. And again I convinced him to go to the Weizmann
431 and now he chairs the group there. I think they are both happy with this and they both
432 really like their work. David Ginat really went into it. What I really like is that they both
433 had formal good work in computer science; they both had PhDs in computer science and
434 this was very, very important.

435

436 **B: This is sort of stepping back. Could you talk about a typical day in your**
437 **professional life? That wouldn't be a typical day in America, working in the Open**
438 **University. It would be interesting for our listeners of what a typical working day is**
439 **like for you.**

440

441 J: I try to. I try to. Can I start when I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, 5:45? I
442 start very early at the university. 7:00, 7:15, 7:30. I start by reading mail but then I will
443 go through material, I will talk with students; I will talk with my colleagues. I have lots
444 of meetings. I'm involved in many things at the Open University, not necessarily to do
445 with computer science. The reason is it has been now two years since I served in the
446 office of vice-president for academic affairs for 6 years. So I am involved in zillions of
447 committees at the Open University. I have one meeting after another, talking with my
448 colleagues, trying to do research with my colleagues, some of them working at the Open
449 University. Michael Armoni who used to be at the Open University and now is spending
450 a year as post doctorate at the Weizmann Institute. We try to find time during the work
451 together. From time to time we have the meeting of the Committee of computer science
452 Ministry of Education committee. I can hardly find time during the day to read materials,
453 to read articles that I would be doing later at home. I leave the university about 5, 6,
454 sometimes 7, in the evening. You said professional life. But then I usually try to help my
455 daughters with their children. Finally 10-11 it's bed. [both laugh]

456

457 **B: What kind of professional organizations do you belong to? How has that**
458 **affected your career? Professional organizations like ACM?**

459
460 J: ACM., SIGCSE. I used to be IEEE. No special professional organizations in
461 Israel, so no. And the CSTA. CSTA!!!

462
463 **B: The CSTA. Can you tell us about what that is and how you got involved?**
464 41:23

465 J: Well, the CSTA is the Computer Science Teachers Association. I've heard about
466 it ever since it was established. But Chris Stephenson invited me to be the international
467 board member on the board of directors, international director. This is the right...board
468 of directors, a year or year and a half ago I agreed. It is very challenging. I don't think
469 that I have done enough to recruit really international members. I have contacts with
470 international colleagues. I tried to organize an international panel for the next ITiCSE
471 but it was very difficult and one of the difficulties was with the European colleagues, the
472 travel expenses this is for the ITiCSE. To get to the SIGCSE was the visa problems
473 which I was unaware of until today but which they were aware of. It didn't work out.
474 We hope. We have board meetings twice a year, very well organized. I attend them.

475
476 I think they are doing great work. They are trying to put together the curriculum, to
477 conduct the many workshops for teachers, computer science teachers, to collect data that
478 is unavailable. In what states are requirements are there requirements for computer
479 science teachers? In what states are universities that offer computer science education
480 certificate programs? Would it be in education school, or in the computer science school?
481 We have only eight universities in Israel, many more colleges, and everything is it is very
482 clear and well-established. It seems to be much more complicated in the US. Even
483 collecting this data seems to be complicated for me as an outsider. The CSTA is doing
484 really great work by trying to collect this data. By serving computer science teachers and
485 trying to find out what they need, what they lack, what they teach actually, because there
486 is no general program they have to teach except the AP. It is very interesting, very
487 demanding. I think that I should do very much more for the CSTA.

488
489 **B: Thank you. Another area that I am always interested in is mentoring. I**
490 **think that in one way you have already answered the question. You acted as a**
491 **mentor to David Ginat and to Moti Ben-Ari. Can you think of other instances**
492 **where you have been a role model mentor for others?**

493
494 J: You make me blushing. Yes, I have done it all my life. I've been mentoring in
495 the Open University, actually everyone who joins the computer science department, in
496 whatever they were doing, until I became vice president for academic affairs itself. For
497 six years I left the department. I used to be head of the department. I was mentoring
498 everyone. I am still doing it. I guide how to write the courses, how to teach, how to talk
499 to the students, how to consult the students. I am doing it today at the Open University
500 with three members, three members of the computer science department. Basically on
501 how to write the study guides for courses.

502

503 **B: One of the things that has not come up is that I have heard men's names, but**
504 **is there a balance between men and women in the field in Israel? Do you have**
505 **women colleagues?**
506

507 J: I have women colleagues, but there is no balance. In the CS education community
508 of faculty at the universities there is a balance now that I think of it. We have Moti Ben-
509 Ari now in the Weizmann Institute computer science educator, David Ginat at the Tel
510 Aviv University, we have Orit Hazzan at the Technion and myself at the Open
511 University, now coming to think of it. [Both laugh] The departments of computer
512 science, no, I don't think there is any balance in the computer science departments.
513 46:44
514

515 At the Open University we are a very small faculty, the Open University has only 60
516 faculty in all areas, it was the motto of the Open University to have a very small kernel
517 and to rely on faculty of other universities as well. So at the computer science
518 department we are seven faculty. We are recruiting two more, but we are seven now.
519 From seven we are three female and 4 males
520

521 **B: Have there been any particular challenges that you have faced? Challenging**
522 **your commitments. You said you had three children, juggling your commitments at**
523 **home, your having to travel to various centers, any particular challenge you want to**
524 **talk about?**
525

526 J: There was always a challenge to find the time to do everything. My biggest
527 challenge was and still is to convince that computer science is a science. To convince the
528 ministry of education, to convince...what is the word? I don't have the word; I'll come
529 back to it later. To convince that computer science is a science like chemistry, physics,
530 biology be taught on the same par with them, that computer science teachers should have
531 a formal education same as physics teacher, or for that matter history teachers. This has
532 been - policymakers this is the word that I looked for-. This has been and is still a
533 challenge, always was and still is.
534 48:18
535

536 **B: Thank you. Do you have any outside interests that would help us understand**
537 **you better? You used to play the accordion.**
538

539 J: I don't play anymore. My grandchildren ask me to play and I promised them but
540 I don't do it. I love to read. I love music. I have only a little time for this. When I am
541 traveling I do some reading.
542

543 **B: It looks like one of the outside interests was certainly your grandchildren**
544 **because we saw pictures of them in your talk.**
545

546 J: Yes, I try to devote time to them. Compensating for the time I didn't devote to
547 my children, maybe didn't devote enough time. I try very hard.
548

549 **B: Are there any of those interests that shaped your career? Partly the**
550 **accordion made possible your career.**

551
552 J: Did it shape my career? I'm not sure. No, I think I felt always running ahead and
553 trying to do as much as I can, not so much for myself, well, of course my career is for me,
554 but I really wanted to do for students, to do good for Israel, for the society.

555
556 **B: Thank you. We are getting down to the wrap up for this interview. If you**
557 **had advice for a young woman just starting out in computer science, especially**
558 **computer science education, what would that advice be?**

559
560 J: Keep running, keep doing. Be determined, you will succeed. Once she makes it.
561 What's that sentence I said? Once you make it, you will be there.

562
563 **B: If you could change one decision you made along the way, along your career**
564 **path what might that be?**

565
566 J: H-m-m. Terrible. I don't think there is anything I want to change.

567
568 **B: That's wonderful, incredible. Well, how about this one if there was one story**
569 **you want to remembered by, that you want everyone to remember this one story,**
570 **what would that one story be?**

571
572 J: Story or something I've done?

573
574 **B: Well, it could be something you did, some occurrence that happened,**
575 **everybody would say, "Oh, that is Judith!"**

576
577 J: I think it is the high school curriculum in computer science. I think this is the
578 most important thing except my children and family, of course, I've done.

579
580 **B: Thank you. We're very glad you spent with us this afternoon and thank you**
581 **for all you are doing for computer science.**

582
583 J: Thank you.