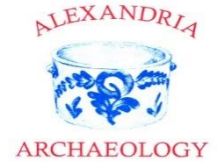




City of Alexandria  
Office of Historic Alexandria  
**Alexandria Legacies**  
**Oral History Program**



Project Name: *Alexandria Legacies Oral History Program: Past, Present, and Future*

Title: *Interview with Jane Ring*

Date of Interview: *November 18, 2020*

Location of Interview: *Interview was conducted via Zoom.*

Interviewer: *Janet Hawkins*

Transcriber: *Meia Cacho*

*Abstract: Jane Lee Ring came to Alexandria, Virginia with her husband in 1956. All four of her children were born at Alexandria Hospital, where she has been actively volunteering ever since she became a member of TWIG. She has served as president of TWIG in the 1970s and was one of the women who began the idea of buying a permanent location for the Thrift Shop. Jane believes in the good deeds the wonderful women of TWIG do for the members of the community and the hospital.*

*Also present at the interview was Lori Ring*

This transcript has been edited by the interviewee and may not reflect the audio-recording exactly.

**Table of Contents/Index**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Topic</b>
00:00	3	Introductions
01:52	3	Joining Twig and Being Active in the Hospital
04:10	4	Volunteer Work
05:39	5	Changes with the Thrift Shop
08:35	6	Memorable Projects
10:21	6	Contributions of Twig to the Hospital
11:20	7	Supporting Twig
12:35	7	Moving Forward
13:02	7	What Makes the Hospital Special
15:08	8	Accomplishments as a Twig President
19:31	9	The Homes Tour
20:30	10	The Cooks Tours and Cookbooks
23:17	11	Staying on as a Twig Member
24:08	12	Short Anecdote on the Thrift Shop

<b>INTRODUCTIONS 00:00</b>	
Janet Hawkins:	Okay. All right, good afternoon. My name is Janet Hawkins. I'm with the Twig, and I'm getting ready to interview Jane Ring: on November 18, 2020, for the Twig History Project. So, Jane, I'd like to welcome you and thank you for participating in this program. And I was wondering if you could start by stating your name and then telling me how you came to Alexandria.
Jane Ring:	I'm Jane Lee Ring. I came to Alexandria in 1956 when my husband graduated from law school. I wasn't yet finished with undergrad, so I had to go back down to Duke [University in Durham, North Carolina] and spend another semester before I graduated. And I got active or interested in Twig because I heard so many nice people talk about what a wonderful organization it was. And I knew Murney Keleher, and she offered to sponsor me in Twig.
JH:	I'm sorry. Could you repeat that again? Who sponsored you?
Jane Ring:	Murney Keleher.
JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	And I was really interested in becoming active in the hospital. All four of my children were born in Alexandria Hospital. My two girls were born in the old Alexandria Hospital at the corner of Duke and Washington Streets. And my two sons were then born at what was a relatively new hospital up on Seminary Road.
JH:	Do you remember what time the new hospital opened?
Jane Ring:	In late 1962.
<b>JOINING TWIG AND BEING ACTIVE IN THE HOSPITAL 01:52</b>	
JH:	Okay. All right, great. So when did you join Twig?
Jane Ring:	In 1968.
JH:	Okay, all-righty.
Jane Ring:	So I've been in fifty-two years, quite a while. And since I'm only thirty-nine, that was quite an accomplishment.
JH:	Absolutely. When you joined Twig, how did you get involved? What did you do for Twig?
Jane Ring:	Well, the first thing you had to do was work in the Thrift Shop, but in addition to that, there was a closed-circuit television program that was sent to the pediatric ward, and Kathy Fannon became the clown, and I became the leopard. And we would put on a program which

	was beamed to the pediatric ward. Then some other Twigs would go into the ward and present each child with a treat. That was really lots of fun. And we were all very sorry when, I've forgotten what the circumstances were but the hospital, I think, was going through another one of their many rehabilitations, and so we had to stop doing that.
JH:	Was that an idea that Twig started, or did the hospital ask you all to do that?
Jane Ring:	I think Twig asked the hospital if we might do that. Previously, in the maternity ward, I'm not sure, maybe other wards, but patients were only allowed two visitors. And so one of the Twig responsibilities was to sit at the door of the maternity ward and pass out little passes that visitors could use. And if a third visitor came, "Sorry, there are no more little pieces of paper. You can't go in until one comes out." Things were very strict back then.
<b>VOLUNTEER WORK 04:10</b>	
JH:	So when you were—your first years in Twig, not only did you work at the Thrift Shop, you also had spent some time at the hospital.
Jane Ring:	Yes.
JH:	You volunteered at the hospital as well.
Jane Ring:	All Twigs were required to work a full day at the hospital. It was a day at the Thrift Shop and a half-day at the hospital.
JH:	So a full day at the Thrift Shop would be, can you remember about how many hours? Just curious.
Jane Ring:	Nine to three.
JH:	Okay. All right.
Jane Ring:	Six hours.
JH:	Uh-huh. And did the hospital require you to do orientation when you were working there?
Jane Ring:	Yes, I believe they did. It's been a long time, so I'm not—.
JH:	No, I'm just curious because I know when I joined Twig, the hospital was sort of off the radar. There were very few people doing that. We were, I think, shortchanged on how many volunteers we needed to work at the Thrift Shop at that time. So did you work at the Thrift Shop once a month or twice a month?
Jane Ring:	Once a month.

JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	And you had a requirement of a certain amount of donations you had to bring in, which, of course, is not a problem now. We're overflowing with donations.
<b>CHANGES WITH THE THRIFT SHOP 05:39</b>	
JH:	So when you—could you describe a little bit about some of the differences at the Thrift Shop? Were you down in the, you were not in the Columbus Street building?
Jane Ring:	No. We were much closer to the railroad station. It was, I think, in the 1100 Block of King Street.
JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	And a rather decrepit place. And it was not a very savory neighborhood. Many of the husbands said, "Okay, we're not allowing our wives to go down there, so look for another place." And we operated in a home on North Columbus Street. There were three of us whose husbands said, "You need to quit renting. You really need to buy a place, and we will buy it, and Twig can pay us back." That was my husband, Fran Vaughan's husband Jim, and Ginny Bradley's husband. But that was an idea whose time had not come. And about two, maybe three years after that, our present location became available for sale. And by then, that idea had taken on, and we bought that place for \$106,000. Imagine any place in Old Town costing only \$106,000, but we did it. And not very many years later, we burned the mortgage.
JH:	This is right. I remember that. I do remember that. So that was pretty unusual for a women's group to purchase a property like that. How did you—were you on the board when that happened?
Jane Ring:	Oh, I was president when Fran and Ginny and I decided we ought to buy.
JH:	Okay. All right.
Jane Ring:	So I might have still been on the board, but I'm not sure. I don't think I necessarily was.
JH:	Okay. All right. So what year were you president? I can't remember myself.
Jane Ring:	I think it was 1972-73.
JH:	Okay, okay.

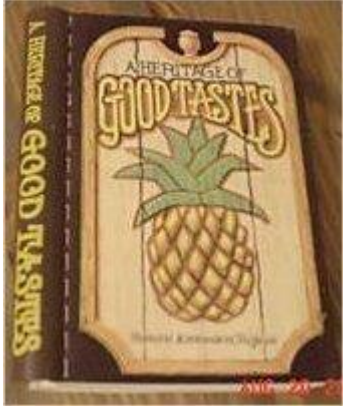
Jane Ring:	I have to look at my pin.
JH:	No, that's fine. I want to say that I think we purchased, the Twig purchased the building in [19]77. So I was trying to kind of come up with when you started the idea and then how it kind of played out.
Jane Ring:	But then maybe I wasn't president when we actually bought it or started the process, but anyway, I was close.
<b>MEMORABLE PROJECTS 08:35</b>	
JH:	Okay. So what were some of the more memorable projects that you have worked on besides the Thrift Shop and working at the hospital that you've enjoyed?
Jane Ring:	Well, years ago, we used to have a Twig Ball. And Twigs were encouraged to invite their friends for dinner prior to the ball and then all gather for the dance afterwards. That was a very big fundraiser for us. And I remember one time Caroline Allen, another Twig, and I were doing a dinner. It was to be at our house. And we had forty people. And Lori knows that was really putting a big burden. We had people sitting all over the house. The bad thing was that the woman that I had hired to come help and clean up after we left to go to the dance had an emergency. She had put in way more dishwasher detergent, and we had a flood. So I'll never forget that particular ball; although we did participate in many others.
JH:	So after the dinner—where did the balls take place?
Jane Ring:	Oh, I was trying to remember. One time, it was, I think, at the <a href="#">Torpedo Factory Art Center</a> . Prior to that, I think it was at the <a href="#">George Mason Hotel</a> , but honestly, I really am not sure.
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS OF TWIG TO THE HOSPITAL 10:21</b>	
JH:	Okay. All right. Okay. What do you think are some of the more important contributions that Twig has made to the hospital?
Jane Ring:	Well, our three wings, Twig Pavilion and the after-surgery, and what's the third one? At any rate, and paying for indigent patients and the scholarships. Twig does a lot, which is why after fifty-two years, I am still involved.
JH:	Is one of those projects more important to you than others?
Jane Ring:	Well, I have stayed in the Twig Pavilion twice, so I'm very glad it's there. It's, it's a lovely wing of the hospital. [laughs]
JH:	But you're not ready to go back there any time soon.

Jane Ring:	No, I hope I don't need to. [laughs]
<b>SUPPORTING TWIG 11:20</b>	
JH:	I was very happy to be in the Surgical Center, but I don't really want to go back there. [laughs] So you basically said you continue to support the Twig because?
Jane Ring:	Because it does so much good. There are a lot of people who don't have a great means, and they depend upon the Thrift Shop. Many of them depend upon Twig supporting indigent patients.
JH:	And so there's the Twig that you're supporting and also the hospital. Is there any particular, are the two just connected to you, or if you weren't in Twig, would you support the hospital the same way or in another way?
Jane Ring:	Well, for years, we've been in the <a href="#">1872 Society</a> , [the year the hospital was founded] which supports the hospital. Now 1872 and Twig are involved, but anyway, I can support the hospital.
<b>MOVING FORWARD 12:35</b>	
JH:	Okay. All righty. What do you think the goals of Twig should be moving forward?
Jane Ring:	Just keep on doing what we're doing. You wonderful young women seem to keep coming up with great ideas of how to help the hospital, and I'm happy to support you.
<b>WHAT MAKES THE HOSPITAL SPECIAL 13:02</b>	
JH:	What do you think, what is it about the hospital that you think makes it special to the Alexandria community?
Jane Ring:	Well, it's very necessary. I think a community needs a hospital, and we're particularly fortunate to have one that is able to take care of so many different health needs, our cancer center—well, there are just lots and lots of reasons to do that.
JH:	Do you have any remembrances about when the hospital, Alexandria was acquired by <a href="#">Inova</a> ? [Inova is a non-profit which operates five hospitals and other health care services in Northern Virginia] I think that the time frame for that was in 1997.
Jane Ring:	I couldn't have told you that.
JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	A lot of us were kind of sad to see it being taken over by a large conglomerate, but I think it was necessary to keep up with the

	modern way of doing things.
JH:	You were sad about it because?
Jane Ring:	Well, it became part of a larger organization as opposed to a strictly local community hospital. And I'm not sure why I felt that because the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County has always been very close. As a matter of fact, since we moved here, Alexandria tried to annex that portion of Fairfax county, and we were not allowed to, but it's always been a very big part of Alexandria community, the hospital, that sort of thing.
<b>ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS A TWIG PRESIDENT 15:08</b>	
JH:	So you said you helped out with the Thrift Shop and also the volunteering, and you were Twig president. Were there any accomplishments from when you were president that you're especially proud of or want to talk about?
Jane Ring:	I was proud just to get through the year because that is a very hard job. [laughs]
JH:	When you were president, did you have the—I know the way Twig has been structured over the years—right now, you have a Membership Chair who's going to be the next president and then the president, and then the past president moves on. How did that work?
Jane Ring:	It used to be that in order to become president, you had to chair the Thrift Shop for a year by yourself, no weekly chairs. And you had to have chaired the Twig Ball. And then you were in line to become president. I'm not quite sure, but I never did either of those things. I was just propelled to the presidency for some reason. I guess I was lucky maybe.
JH:	So you had probably had children in school then. So you were—?
Jane Ring:	Actually, my youngest was not in school. I had a dear friend who would keep my youngest while I did my Twig duties, but also, when I joined, you could not join after the age of thirty-five. So things have changed quite a bit.
JH:	Exactly, exactly.
Jane Ring:	But back in those days, not very many women worked outside the home. And now, of course, a great many of the members work outside the home. So it became necessary to have the age moved up.
JH:	So Twig has always had a general meeting, monthly meetings. Where were those meetings held when you were president?



Jane Ring:	Those meetings were held down on Prince Street, which was part of the hospital. It used to be the nurses' home. And we would meet there once a month.
JH:	Was that in the <a href="#">Swann-Daingerfield House</a> ?
Jane Ring:	You know, I'm trying to think. I believe it's called that, yes. It's now condominiums.
JH:	Right, okay.
Jane Ring:	It would be in the 100 Block, right after Washington Street.
JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	And that would be, what, maybe five or six.
JH:	So at some point, that's where the hospital nursing school, are you thinking the same place?
Jane Ring:	Yes.
JH:	Okay. So Twig also met there. Did you have any contact with nurses in the nursing program?
Jane Ring:	No.
JH:	Okay. No, I know. That's actually—.
Jane Ring:	We provide scholarships, but we really had no contact.
<b>THE HOMES TOUR 19:31</b>	
JH:	Right, just as an aside, [the] Lyceum is really interested in learning more about the nursing school and trying to locate any women who attended the school. And Mary Doyle, who is still active in Twig, she's a Sustainer, but on the board this year, she actually has a friend that when she was a nurse worked with her. So I was curious about that. Well, that's interesting. That's very interesting indeed. So did you ever work on the Homes Tour?
Jane Ring:	I chaired the, let's go back a little further, the Senior Auxiliary, whatever that was, hosted or chaired the Homes Tour for years. And their members were dying out and not being replaced. And so Twig was asked to take it over. And I think Jean Kling chaired that the first time, but Fran Vaughan and I co-chaired the second Homes Tour after Twig took it over. And I think we cleared about \$22,000, and that was just astronomical. No one could believe we chaired that, I mean, we cleared that much.
JH:	That was a lot.

Jane Ring:	So here, again, things do change.
<b>THE COOKS TOURS AND COOKBOOKS 20:30</b>	
JH:	Did you participate in the Cooks Tours that Twig did?
Jane Ring:	No, not really. I did recipes for all of the cookbooks we've done. In fact, I did a lot of the artwork for the very first one.
JH:	And what cookbook was that?
Jane Ring:	Oh, dear, Leaves of something. I should have looked that up. And if you want to know, I've got it right in my kitchen, but I don't think—
JH:	Those are hard to come by, those cookbooks, of the five or six that we've done.
Jane Ring:	Oh, all the recipes were done in handwriting. It was very primitive if you want to know.
JH:	Well, that cookbook came out when exactly? Do you remember? Was it the '70s?
Jane Ring:	Probably the '70s.
JH:	Uh-huh. And then the next one was <i>Heritage of Good Tastes</i>
	
Jane Ring:	Yes.
JH:	And I know there are some recipes of yours in there because I still make your pumpkin bread every Thanksgiving. [laughter]
Jane Ring:	That's funny because a lot of people even today send me notes and say, "I just made your pumpkin bread, and it's wonderful."
JH:	It is. It's very wonderful.
Jane Ring:	And I got it from a dear friend. It's not my original one, but it is a very—.

Lori Ring:	Can I have it? [laughter]
Jane Ring:	Yes, I'll send it to you, Lori.
LR:	Thank you. I just made pumpkin bread the other day, and I didn't like it.
JH:	Lori, are you telling me—this is another aside that I won't put in. Do you not have a copy of <i>Heritage of Good Tastes</i> ?
LR:	Mm-mm.
JH:	All right. We'll see you again. I kind of collect them, and then I give them to Twigs who actually—because they're really wonderful cookbooks. You know, when Julie Lineberry was moving, she had some. And she also had the Seaport Savories. And if you like them, I'd be more than happy for you to have them.
LR:	Oh, thank you.
Jane Ring:	I could will them to you. [laughter]
LR:	I don't want to wait that long. [laughter]
Jane Ring:	You're probably right.
JH:	Well, I'm going to make myself a note right now for my asides, but anyway, did you work at all on any of the cookbooks other than the—?
Jane Ring:	Yeah.
JH:	Okay.
Jane Ring:	Oh, you mean Lori or me?
JH:	You.
Jane Ring:	Yes, I did work on—I didn't work other than supplying perhaps a recipe for the last two. I did work on the others.
JH:	Did you all—I'm trying to remember. Did you all test recipes for those cookbooks? You did? Uh-huh. That's good. That's a good thing to do. And I think in <i>Heritage of Good Tastes</i> won some awards, didn't it?
Jane Ring:	I believe it did.
<b>STAYING ON AS A TWIG MEMBER 23:17</b>	
JH:	Yeah, okay. All right. So let's see, do you have any other things you'd like to tell us about your experiences in Twig?
Jane Ring:	Not really. It's been a wonderful fifty-two years. The women who

	are in Twig are just the best. And my husband occasionally says, “Don’t you think you’ve been a Twig long enough?” but I think that once you become an honorary, you lose contact with a lot of people. And I just don’t want to lose contact.
JH:	So you’re still volunteering at the Shop when you can or whenever you’re allowed to.
Jane Ring:	Whenever I’m allowed to, when this [COVID-19] pandemic goes away, I’ll be happy to do that.
<b>SHORT ANECDOTE ON THE THRIFT SHOP 24:08</b>	
JH:	Uh-huh. Okay. All right. Let’s see.
Jane Ring:	I will tell you one interesting Thrift Shop story. Back in the late ‘60s, I was the music program at the Alexandria Daycare Center, which at that time met in Third Street Baptist Church, on Duke Street. And I used to wonder, how in the world the children of welfare mothers came for their music class so beautifully dressed? And then one day, a little girl walked in with my oldest child’s outfit on. And I suddenly know, well, of course, they go to the Twig Thrift Shop. [laughs]
JH:	That’s funny. So anyway, well, I think if you don’t have anything else to share, then I think we are done. And I thank you so much for your time.
Jane Ring:	I think that’s great.
JH:	I really appreciate everything.
Jane Ring:	Well, thank you for doing this. You’re terrific.
JH:	Okay. I’m going to stop this right now, and then I’m just going to tell you what we’re doing.