PATTY: Hi, my name is Patty Sicular. I’d like to welcome you all to the Ford Model Agency. I am collaborating with FIT along with Professor Karen Trivette Cannell, who’s the director of archiving and special collections. And we’re conducting a series of interviews on our models and the relationship of fashion and beauty and the relationship to the Ford Model Agency. Today is Friday, April 30, 2010. We’re in New York City at the Ford Model Agency. We’re going to be interviewing the model Laina Pecora, who was your modeling name. And she started in the era 1987. And I’m so please to have here, because Elena put the plus-size modeling division on the map worldwide. She was the first superstar in that division. She was the first model to earn over a quarter of a million dollars a year back in the 1980s. [01:00] She has appeared in Vogue Magazine, Revlon ads, People’s Most Beautiful People issue. And she’s a wonderful person. So we’re also going to have a guest interview, Morgen Schick DeMann, who modeled with us in the ’80s also. And Eva [Techian?], one of our agents here at Ford is going to ask a few questions also. Eva.

EVA: Hi.
PATTY: So I’m about to take my seat now and we can start with the interviews. You can start.

SCHICK DEMANN: I’m going to start from the present and then go back, because I want to know when somebody says your credentials like that. Patty just told the world that you put, not only put the plus-size modeling industry on the map, but you made the most money, the first person to ever maybe $250,000. The first person to ever do a Revlon as a 12-plus. All of these incredible milestones. [02:00]

What does that feel like now mother of two, you know, evolved woman, what does that feel like to hear?

LAINA: Surreal. It’s almost like you forget it happened, because it’s a different part of your life. I modeled for 30 years. And those things are said and you look back at the pictures it’s truly surreal. It’s almost like it didn’t happen, but you can remember every single day in this broad span of career.

SCHICK DEMANN: Now, for me, I mean I worked with you for all of those years and you were the supermodel. You were, I don’t care whatever any plus-size or any other supermodel can claim, in the industry that we all knew of you were it. [03:00] You were the Christie Brinkley of plus-size models. What was it like to be so such a superstar, even though it was in kind of our small part of the world, what
was it like to be the number-one supermodel in that industry?

LAINA: I love the industry so much and I treasured the whole artistic process of photography. And, of course, there were different times in my career where it was the starving artist, so the money, of course, was absolutely fabulous. But I almost didn’t even realize the magnitude of it at the time. It was [04:00] as if I went to work every day and I loved it and I would enjoy my friends and enjoy the artists that brought everything together. And at the end of the day you got your voucher signed and you went home and you had your other part of your life. And it wasn’t until someone noticed you on the street, recognized you, or you went into the agency and Patty or someone else would say, “Oh, here’s you latest cover. Oh, we’re having issues with your booking. Your bookings are like four people that want you the same week.” And I’m trying to figure this out.

PATTY: Same day. Not same week, same day.

LAINA: Yeah, I mean it was being booked three months in advance. And knowing where you were going to be and how you were able to plan your life and who -- it was like which friends do I get to see? I mean it was a very, very close-knit group. [05:00] And prior to me starting the designers, you know, big clothes for large size women and
there wasn’t much style. So after we started it became fashionable. So it was -- what was the original question?

SCHICK DEMANN: No. But it’s just so interesting because you never acted like a diva. You never -- you were such a team player and you were so -- and the only -- and the other thing is that you always had something else going on. It was like you were the iconic supermodel of our industry, but you were always like had a jewelry business, or you were always like making clothes, or you were always like -- so it was as if it was your modeling, even though you were the most successful by far ten times over, you never took it [06:00] -- it never went to your head. It’s like you almost didn’t notice that you were this big. And there were other people who were not as big as, you know, in the industry who like got press conferences. And yet you kind of just went about her way and did her thing and she was the best.

PATTY: Did you realize during the time that you were the biggest?

LAINA: I was working another job when I got rediscovered in the industry. And I had a Cosmopolitan layout that came out, and it was very tasteful and quite beautiful. Paul [McClansky?], we had to reshoot it four times, ended up getting beautiful prints from it. But my boss at my job, I
was health club director, and he saw it. And I was called into the office and I was fired. And I just thought, you know, I was only working two days a week [07:00] and the days were booked. And this was -- I mean it happened so quickly. And I went to the office and I thought, oh, OK, so I’ll let them know I have more time, because I just got fired and I got my two-week notice. And I walked in thinking, OK, I’ll try to -- I don’t want to beg, but I need to beg. And I was called, summoned into the office, “Please come in the office.” And I was like, whoa, like you know.

SCHICK DEMANN: And this is at Ford, you were summoned to Ford.

LAINA: This was actually at [Cuington?] which --

SCHICK DEMANN: OK, then right before.

LAINA: Yeah. And a month later everything else broke up.

PATTY: (inaudible)

LAINA: Yeah. But I walked in and I thought, oh, I forgot her name, Hodge, whatever.

PATTY: Mary.

LAINA: And I’ve been fired from jobs before, like a waitressing job and different things, but I was never fired from two jobs in one day. And I thought she was going to let me go. And she said, she threw her book down [08:00]
and she said, “I can’t handle you anymore.” And I thought, oh, I am going to get fired twice in one day. I have no job, no career and I’m going to have to go back to Pittsburgh. And she said, “I’m so frustrated. You have to make a choice, either quit your other job or take this full time.” And I said, “Done.” She said, “Really?” I said, “I got fired today.” She said, “Beautiful.” And that’s how the whole career was, it just was like a slow-moving --

SCHICK DEMANN: Organic evolution of an incredible career. OK, so now I want to go back to you were a what we call in the industry a straight size model first, so you were a skinny model first. What attracted you to the modeling industry?

LAINA: I started studying acting in a little drama theatrical school when I was 11. And that was my focus [09:00] and it was also sports. And by the time I hit 13 my mother was really feeling that if I did not get some charm school under my belt that it was going to be a very tough life.

SCHICK DEMANN: So you were kind of a tomboy?

LAINA: Big tomboy. So she sent me to a six-week teen charm little course at the local Kaufman’s.

PATTY: In what town?

LAINA: In Pittsburgh.

SCHICK DEMANN: In Pittsburgh.
LAINA: And at the end you got a photo shoot. And it was with the photographer who did all the print work. So when I finished the class and got my little photo shoot and then was asked to do some of their local ads it went right over my head. It was $45 an hour and I was 14 years old at that point. And it was like, “Oh, that’s going to interfere with softball practice.” It just, you know, and then the photographer said to me, “You know, you study acting, don’t you?” You know, I’m like, “Yeah, my little classes on Thursday nights.” He said, “Well, a lot of models are trying to break into acting/model to get their stepping stone in.”

SCHICK DEMANN: Right.

LAINA: And I was like, “Oh, count me in.” And I immediately started working, you know, once a week all through high school and junior high.

SCHICK DEMANN: Cool. What do you think fascinates the public about models?

LAINA: Well, a couple things. One, not everybody can do this. And it’s something that there are so many different people that have to select you before you get into that picture. You have an agent that has to take you on. You have photographers that have to decide whether or not they’re going to take your pictures to get your book
together. Then you have the client. [11:00] And there are just so many people that get you into that one picture that everybody on the street can’t do it. And there are certain things that are God-given. You have to have to have a high -- you know, there are certain things that you cannot buy, you’re either born with them or you’re not. So I think it’s something that people will look at pictures and say I can never do that. And a lot of people can’t.

SCHICK DEMANN: That’s very interesting. And in that genre, what -- who are some of your favorite models? Did you have like old time -- because you’re very -- you have a very kind of vintage -- it’s amazing that you were a tomboy, because you’re so vintage, like old-school glamorous to me, so it’s just amazing that you’re a tomboy. So do you have older iconic actresses and models that you were attracted [12:00] to, or in some of your more contemporary models that you think are amazing?

LAINA: I think that when I started the magazines were the teen magazines, the Seventeen, and I just looked at those girls and thought they were so fabulous, so beautiful and so fun to be able to be running down with the horse and the perfectly perfect little outfit. But I enjoyed the old movies, the black and whites, the Audrey, the Katharine, all those beautiful women who had so much style and talent
and they had -- it oozed out of their pores. And then, of course, the clothes.

SCHICK DEMANN: Yeah.

LAINA: Not that the clothes make the woman and the woman makes the clothes, but the clothes complimented the incredibly looking women. Now, as far as models, you know, being a brunette, attracted to the brunettes [13:00] And it was Raquel Welch. And as I got older it was, of course, Cindy Crawford and Kim Alexis that was a favorite too. But, you know, I started so young that it was a lot of these gals that are still --

SCHICK DEMANN: I know you have thousands of modeling memories. But if there’s one thing that stands out for, you know, a trip or a job you got, what would that be? That one memory that you’re like, wow, I’ll never forget that?

LAINA: I was back into the industry. I took a two-year break, had some weight issues. I was quite thin being an athlete and I had to get thinner. And I tried [14:00] and kept it up as long as I could, and then it just I really ruined my metabolism at that point and the weight just went opposite. And then I had foot surgery. And when I got rediscovered I was brought on a Spiegel job, which was quite a big feat. And the stylist begged the art director to take me on this trip to California. And it was a last
minute thing and she said, “Well, how will we know she can move?” “I know she can move, she did this before.” Well, so all these things came together and I went on this trip. And I did my first shot and, you know, all these people around. I hadn’t been on a set for almost two years. And they took they first roll of film and the art director said, “That’s our cover and this is our new girl.” [15:00] And it was like, “Oh, OK, that’s nice.” And from that day forward the rest just meshed and went together in such a magical way.

SCHICK DEMANN: It’s true, I remember that. So what would you say is different now from when you were a model in your career span to the way it is now?

LAINA: You know, years ago it was hard work and there were so many things that brought together a career. Now it seems that anybody who did something not a positive thing, whether it’s illegal or did some -- I’m trying to -- [16:00]

SCHICK DEMANN: Illicit, illegal?

LAINA: Yeah, I’m trying to -- the word that’s as nice as possible.

SCHICK DEMANN: Not immoral.

LAINA: All of a sudden you -- your 15 minutes of fame. I mean Andy Warhol said, “But it seems like everybody is
getting three and a half minutes of fame and it’s not for the right reasons.” So it seems like something that we took so seriously and were so professional and were on time and did have all the proper things in our model bag to complete what we needed to bring to the table. Now there are these shows. I even asked, I won’t hold them to this, but a professional in this industry who is quite revered, “What do you think of these modeling shows?” And this person said, “They’re not real. If they were real models they wouldn’t need a show.”

SCHICK DEMANN: Right.

LAINA: And that’s where you see --

SCHICK DEMANN: See, we were real.

LAINA: Yeah.

SCHICK DEMANN: You were a real model. It’s true, you were a real, I get that. [17:00]

LAINA: I mean it’s having these practice tests in whirlpools of mud, that doesn’t define --

SCHICK DEMANN: That’s not the kind of career that we knew.

LAINA: Right.

SCHICK DEMANN: We were it was a career. Now it’s almost kind of like a joke, or it’s kind of made for TV.

LAINA: And I think that’s why there are so many more celebrities endorsing products than ever before, because
the modeling pool is limited. I mean there are a lot of girls that have great careers in catalogue. But as far as the editorial gals it just seems to be the same ones, because the new crop hasn’t come out of this fake TV, like this fake world.

PATTY: Fake celebrity.

SCHICK DEMANN: Yeah, she was just saying how it’s -- so when you -- so you obviously didn’t have -- you had high expectations [18:00] when you started, but you were basically the wrong -- you were being shrunken into a body that was not right for your metabolism. And then you started and became this iconic supermodel of the plus-size industry. What would you say was your biggest contribution to the industry? I know what I think yours is, but I’m going to let you say yours first. I know you didn’t do this to me, but --

LAINA: I would have to say that one of the greatest things I took away from the industry was the fact that I was accepted for being myself. And I was always one that was very high energy and very exuberant and very different from a lot of the other gals. And it was that energy and that just being myself. So I would come to the set [19:00] in my Levis and a t-shirt with my hair on top of my head and they would do this incredible hair and makeup, and almost
like a dog on a leash let me on that set. And it was just they paid me for being me. And that was one thing that I just loved. It was like, oh, I wake up, I get to be me and they’re going to pay me for it.

SCHICK DEMANN: How cool is that?

LAINA: How fabulous is that?

SCHICK DEMANN: So from another model’s perspective in the industry at the similar time, what I thought Laina did was before Laina, especially in the plus-size market anyone was just a warm body plus-size model who was bigger and who wasn’t unattractive.

PATTY: (inaudible) with a pretty face.

SCHICK DEMANN: Laina made plus-size models, she raised the bar that a plus-size model had to be gorgeous. [20:00] She was gorgeous. There was no one who looked like her. Her heart-shaped face, her eyes, her mouth. She set the bar that every plus-size model now has to be the same bone characteristics and beauty as what was expected in the straight size market. She made it beautiful, you had to be beautiful.

PATTY: But I didn’t think of her as a plus model, I just thought of her as a beautiful women.

SCHICK DEMANN: I know that.
PATTY: But I want you to hold this up, because this is my favorite picture of you.

SCHICK DEMANN: Oh, it’s so cute, yes.

PATTY: I’ve always loved that picture.

LAINA: This was 4W. And when Patty saw this, to this day, for 20 years now she’s been saying this is her favorite picture.

SCHICK DEMANN: I love that picture.

LAINA: And when I did a card and one thing that complimented my success was I did a new card every three months. And Morton did the makeup on most of them. [21:00] And it’s not that I wanted to shove myself down their throats, but it was there are new fabulous beautiful pictures. And like you were saying it was just a warm body and these gals didn’t really have figures. And being a larger gal and having an athletic frame it was all proportioned. So putting me in underwear or putting me in a bra, which you got, you know, triple the money, which was more fabulousness, it was something that you had to be a model type.

SCHICK DEMANN: Right.

PATTY: I think before you go with the large models, it was just a large body with a decent face.

SCHICK DEMANN: Right.
PATTY: It was almost like a mannequin, they stood there. Whereas you moved, you had all the energy and you were just a great model. You were a beautiful woman, a great model.

SCHICK DEMANN: Exactly.

LAINA: And I think a lot of that when I first moved to New York, prior to moving to New York [22:00] I would fly up every three or four months and do tests and little jobs here and there. And when I started with Elite they for the first three months you had two and three test a day. Now, this was back then and you didn’t pay for these tests, but you worked your butt off. You were up at six o’clock in the morning and you ended up working a minimum of 12 hours. Then you went home and you fell asleep and you were exhausted, and then you started all over again. And I remember my first summer I literally probably had 200 tests in three months. And when all gals were going and getting shipped to either Japan or Italy or Paris, I wasn’t selected. And I was so heartbroken. And I thought here I did all this hard work, I dropped out of college. I’m making -- thinking that this is, [23:00] you know, I started working making money. And I went to my booker’s office and I started crying and asked why. And I said, “Well, all my friends are leaving and I’m here, I’m stuck here in New York. And I want to know what did I do wrong?”
And they said, “You’re the only one that didn’t go. You don’t have to go. The other gals have to go to get more experience to get the notice. You know, you’re in New York City two months and you have Revlon. You have been working for every magazine. You have nowhere to go but up. You don’t have to go to Europe.” And I walked away thinking this just might work out for me.

PATTY: Did your parents get to see your success, your family?

LAINA: Yes. In fact, when I first told my -- I was on scholarship, academic scholarship. When I dropped out of college my mother was heartbroken. And I handed her my grades, which were practically a 4.0 and I said, “I can’t do this anymore. I need to go to New York.” And she said, “Well, let me talk to your father.” And she wrote me a note the next morning, “Daddy says it’s OK.” And I said -- and at the bottom she said, “Do you want a ride?” So it was like, OK, fine, I have their blessing. And a week later my mother drove me to New York. And that was March of ’82 and here we are almost 30 years later.

PATTY: Yeah.

SCHICK DEMANN: Did your friends, once you started modeling, did they treat you differently?

PATTY: In high school it was horrible. It was so horrible. They couldn’t get out of the box. Here I was in a steel
town trying to get -- thinking any way I could get out. I did parents, I was in 13 pageants. I was Miss Teen USA. I was Miss Teen Pennsylvania. [25:00] I did first runner up for Ms. USA Pennsylvania. And I did local commercials and the local Horns and Kaufman’s ads. And there was terrible things. I’d open my locker and there would be the picture with all these terrible things written. And high school is just something I just had to get through. Once I moved to New York it was other models. And it was the nice girls that wanted you to succeed. And it was the icky girls that were just -- and there’s a bad apple in every career. But once I got here I learned, so I knew that, you know, if you pick the right friends in any career it’s only going to compliment your effort.

PATTY: Who were some of your favorite photographers you worked with?

LAINA: You know, I don’t know if he’s still around, but there was one photographer who did a lot with Spiegel, his name is Alan Kaplan. [26:00] And he was the character of character. And a lot of people did not enjoy working with him. I did. When I was first in New York he did a test with me and he said, “You’re going to do OK, don’t worry.” And it was like a fatherly, grandfather type with his pipe. And I thought, OK, well, if anything in my head Alan Kaplan
says I’m going to do OK. Six months later he got me a test with a friend of his that was an art director for Limited. Had nothing to do with -- was not a photographer, but he did a photo shoot. And about 10 years later I re-met this man. And the shots that I did he ended up doing these six foot by eight foot murals that are still in the Museum of Modern Art in Cincinnati. And it’s this whole story board of this princess. And I was the princess that was in imaginary person, but he used 15 images for this story line. And he ended up giving me one of them. And he gave me a smaller one that’s only four foot by six foot, but it’s my --

SCHICK DEMANN: Teeny.

LAINA: Yeah, it’s in my office and something I always look at and think, wow, how many people have something like this? You know, and it was a gift and it was very special.

PATTY: Did Eileen Ford ever give you any advice? And how close were you with the Fords, Katie, Eileen, Jerry?

LAINA: You know, I worked so much that I didn’t even have time to come in and get my paychecks, they were sent to me. When I first came to New York at 16 the big rage were blondes. And when I saw Eileen and I was just so scared and so excited and she looked right at me, she said, “You’re a beautiful girl, but you’re a brunette. [28:00]
Don’t change that. Your time will come, but it’s not here and it’s not now.” And I thought that’s honest. It wasn’t -- it was honest and it was -- it still gave me hope that I could have a career in this.

SCHICK DEMANN: When you were in the peak, I would say peak of your career, you were in San Diego and you met your husband. A lot of women would’ve been like too bad, I am the hottest model right now, I’m not going anywhere. You kind of chose love over your giant career. I mean you still worked, but something changed. What was it that made you decide to not like stay on this giant trajectory [29:00] and to choose your husband and like moving to California and doing all that kind of stuff?

LAINA: They were quite huge changes. And I think that when I was out there on a location shoot and we were having a crew dinner and I was eating, and I looked up and I met eyes with this man. And our eyes followed each other to where I couldn’t see him anymore. And I was just so confused, I couldn’t figure it out. For a minute I was just so lost. And the gal next to me said, “You haven’t seen the last of him.” And it was like that second I met my soulmate. And I ended up, it’s a lovely, wonderful, fun story, but 27 months later were married. And it was very difficult. I mean there were a lot of changes. And it was something
that I knew I wasn’t going to have modeling [30:00] for the rest of my life, but I knew I was going to have this man the rest of my life. And in July we’ll be celebrating 18 years of marriage with two children. And I enjoy waking up every day with him next to me.

SCHICK DEMANN: That’s so great.

EVA: Yeah, actually, (inaudible) Magazine spoke about adding more old size models. I mean you were sort of on the forefront of bringing back the starting modeling as different, in terms of being a different size. I mean a slightly bigger size than an average model, right. Do you think that that’s — do you think it’s going to be more prevalent in modeling?

LAINA: I think it’s going to go two different ways. I think that the magazines, I mean I had some of the first editorials in Bazaar [31:00] and Vogue as a plus-size model. And when people would write in their comments they either loved it or hate it. And it was a very black and white thing. I think now because the designers are onboard and the clothes are more beautiful and it’s more about being healthy than being skinny, I think that -- I’ve noticed, I mean I look at the magazines and I see that it has evolved and that there is more of an acceptance in the fashion world to be different sizes. But it also has gone
over with age, you know, beauty at every age. I mean that’s fashion at every age. So I think that the magazines are catering more to the public and letting them know, OK, we have given our seal of approval and it is OK to be bigger, [32:00] different, older, shorter, it’s OK, and you can dress well no matter where you’re coming from.

EVA: Can you tell me which designers, which fashion designers you worked with in the past that you really worked well with in terms of your size?

LAINA: Liz Claiborne, when she was alive she had a huge hand in the plus-size market. And I remember the few times I was able to work with her where the fittings were done when she was looking and pointing and planning. I thought I learned a lot, because she -- when you work with the designers and they’re draping fabric on you, a lot of them I don’t remember because they were in-house designers. [33:00] At the time there weren’t a lot of the designers that we know now. But when they would literally make clothes on you it was just a thrilling exciting thing to have that mind and that creativity and that fabric and how they would just create something from a [bolt?] that was just amazing.
PATTY: Could you stand up and show us your outfit and tell us about your outfit what you’re wearing now? Could you model for us?

LAINA: Yes.

PATTY: It’s amazing.

LAINA: One of the bonuses of this industry was to travel. And the first thing I did any time I checked in a hotel was to find out where the thrift shops were and where the vintage clothing shop. And I have acquired clothing from all over the world. This particular shirt is 60 years old.

PATTY: Where did you get it?

SCHICK DEMANN: It’s so beautiful.

LAINA: This I got at an antique show in Del Mar, California. The skirt’s new. I forget who it is, I’m sorry.

PATTY: It’s OK.

LAINA: But one of my loves is vintage clothes, and I’ve done quite a bit with that. But you can -- fashion is such now that you can have a 60-year-old shirt with a 4-month-old skirt and it can still work. It can still make it something special.

EVA: Can you name some other fashion designers that you like to (inaudible)?
LAINA: Oh, now, some of my favorites now are Michael Kors, of course. You know, with my figure I am a curvy gal, and a lot of, you know, if you have a waist sometimes it’s a little difficult to find clothes that fit. But Michael Kors does a great job with that. And I’m drawing a blank.

PATTY: That’s OK, we can come back to that. What did you want to ask, Morgen?

SCHICK DEMANN: What did you take, like your beauty tips, what did you take away from being in the industry? Like there’s two aspects of this, what did you take away like physically from it, and what did you take away mentally about your beauty from being a model? And what tips, like actual products or secrets could you tell?

LAINA: One of the things I learned at 21 years old was wrinkle cream. Now, at a young age I started using an alpha hydroxy at 21. And I’ve moved up since then. But one of those brilliant pieces of advice that I got as far as beauty is start using preventative aging and skin care as soon as you’re born. And then as soon as you hit like 20, 21 start with, of course, sunblock and all of that, but I think that it was wrinkle cream at 21 that was one of the most brilliant things anybody ever told me to do.
PATTY: Do you follow a special diet or have you?

LAINA: No. In fact, one of the things that unfortunately I took away from my modeling career was I was asked to get thinner than imaginable. And I was sent to a doctor that would give me shots on a daily basis for a six-week period that was the placenta from pregnant women.

PATTY: That wasn’t from Ford though.

LAINA: No, no. [37:00]

SCHICK DEMANN: No, it’s just in general, the pressure for her to be skinny before she was at Ford.

LAINA: Yeah.

SCHICK DEMANN: Your earlier career.

LAINA: Yeah, my earlier career unfortunately there were some unethical things done and I did not eat for six weeks. And I really think that with me still growing and developing in my body that it did such irreplaceable damage. In the course of this interview my voice has come in and out, and that’s because I have acquired an autoimmune disease that affects my speech, the muscles in my face, my vision, chewing, and it was all because of irreparable damage that was done trying to be something that I wasn’t. And that’s one of the most unfortunate things that I have taken from this industry. And it’s something I will have to live with the rest of my life [38:00] and something that I have to be
on constantly. I mean I’m in the process of getting treatment now. And between the medications and the drugs it’s very difficult. Difficult on my family. And there are some days I physically cannot get out of bed. So if there was anything I would change or do differently or tell any young women, don’t be something you’re not. Be true to yourself in whatever that is. Whatever size that is, whatever your desires in career or your paths, stay true to yourself.

SCHICK DEMANN: That’s probably the best piece of advice you could give anyone. And it’s tragic that you have to live with something [39:00] the rest of your life that you were more pressured to do in order to be something that you weren’t. So that’s a huge beauty secret.

LAINA: I didn’t think of it like that, but that’s true.

SCHICK DEMANN: It’s a huge beauty secret. It’s kind of what I was alluding to. It was up to her to (inaudible).

LAINA: It’s really a life secret.

SCHICK DEMANN: But it’s really, it’s a life secret. So you, I know that you have -- what has it been like to be a Ford Model?

LAINA: It has been an incredible ride. And I saw that, I guess with my work ethic and growing up in a hardworking family that respected that if you worked hard you will
reap. But my professionalism complimented the agency and the agency complimented my effort. And it was something that being on time [40:00] and just following all the basic rules. They did everything twice. So it was something that was also inspired, it inspired you to do better and be better. I mean the professionalism was something that you knew it was on -- it was like that little angel, it was always on your side, you knew it was going to guide you. And the rest of the world respected it. And no matter where you went with that Ford book you were somebody. And for a steel town girl from Pittsburgh that was pretty awesome.

PATTY: I have to say you’re one of the easiest models that ever booked, because every day there’s different opportunities, choices. You really didn’t have any down days. And I remember I’d be able to call you at four o’clock in the afternoon and you’d be modeling at [Caushier’s?] Park. I’d say, “You have a seven o’clock flight, you’re going to California for a booking.” And you would just say, “OK, I’ll be there.” [41:00] And you never once said no. And even if you sat in (inaudible) between two large people you always smiled and said, “But I had a nice conversation.” And you always made the best, you always saw the best in everything.
SCHICK DEMANN: Totally true.

LAINA: I also looked at everything as an adventure.

PATTY: And a gift.

LAINA: And how many jobs are you paid, and there were many times that you would get flight, I forget what it’s called, flight --

PATTY: Flight delays?

LAINA: No, the money for travel time.

SCHICK DEMANN: Oh, travel time.

LAINA: Hello, that travel time.

SCHICK DEMANN: Travel time.

LAINA: How many jobs do you have where you’re paid half your day rate to get across the country?

PATTY: Right.

LAINA: And then you’re put up in a fabulous hotel.

SCHICK DEMANN: And fed.

LAINA: And fed well. And there’s note saying, “Welcome. If there’s anything you need, call me.” Now, this is all before cell phones and all that, so it was much more difficult for you to get in touch with us and for us to get in touch with you with pay phones. And we always worked it out. But it was like, well, I get to go to California. [42:00] It’s not like, awe. And that’s what was the
difference that, oh, they’re paying me again to be me and to go somewhere fabulous.

SCHICK DEMANN: Going back to my car.

PATTY: I just have to tell you, and I haven’t done this in any of the other interviews. But this girl is such a joy to work with. I love working, she’s one of my models of all time. Always a drive, such a drive. And one of the most beautiful models I have ever had the honor to represent. And we’re still friends all these years later.

LAINA: Well, Patty, thank you. But you’re the best in your league. You truly, you always thought about me. You always asked about schedules. Yes, you would book that flight at seven o’clock to California, but it was always, I don’t know, professionalism and respect. “Oh, have something fabulous. Can you do it?” And it was always yes, but you always asked. And you always in your notes, “Hair and makeup ready,” or “have your shoes, [43:00] your nails, bikini ready.” You always made sure we had whatever we needed. And for that I thank you, because you made me successful.

PATTY: Well, Eileen made me successful, so I made you, so we just passed it down the line.

LAINA: And hopefully someday I can make someone else successful in my vintage, in my other --
PATTY: You are successful. Because all the models that are in the plus division now they have you to thank for paving the way. Whenever you see a beautiful model in Vogue Magazine or cosmetic, whatever, it’s because you were the first that did it.

LAINA: Well, fortunately this will go on records as that. And I appreciate -- I mean I had to quit working when I was -- I’m 46 now, I had to quit working at 43 because of my Myasthenia Gravis. But from the time I was 14 to 43 I --

PATTY: That’s a 30-year run.

LAINA: Thirty-year run where -- and if I didn’t have this illness I may still be, you know, modeling the wrinkle cream. [44:00] But it started with the teen stuff and then the beauty stuff and the plus size. And then when I had babies it was the maternity and then fitness. So for 30 years I’ve got to see and do it all and I learned a lot. I mean I had my own travel bag line, I had my clothing line, I’m doing other things from everything I learned in that 30 years.

PATTY: Did you want to add anything, anything you’d like to add?

LAINA: I appreciate being here and thank you. And anybody who sees this, take care of your health, it’s the most important thing.
PATTY: Thank God you were here.

SCHICK DEMANN: Why?

PATTY: Because you -- thank God you were here. You’re pretty good at this. Would you want to do more interviews with me?

SCHICK DEMANN: Sure, [45:00] it’s so much fun. It’s so way more fun than being interviewed.

PATTY: The next one I’m doing is May 5th, we’re doing three people. Kim Charlton whose era started in 1970s. Harry King who did hair for 30 years with [Avedon Penn and Stubula?].

SCHICK DEMANN: Oh, I know him.

PATTY: He has no hair, but he did hair. And Gideon Lewin, photographer.

SCHICK DEMANN: That one I can’t do, because I will be in Tampa.

PATTY: OK. But I’m going to ask you (inaudible)

SCHICK DEMANN: No, no, no, I will do others. But I’m in Tampa. I’m in Tampa until that night.

PATTY: But I’m going to definitely call you.

LAINA: She’s fabulous.

PATTY: I know she is.

EVA: Isn’t amazing how so many aspects of this career overlap the -- you both look so beautiful.
SCHICK DEMANN: Well, we have a legacy to keep up; right?

PATTY: That’s right. So do I.

SCHICK DEMANN: So do you.

PATTY: I have to try to keep up with you guys, are you kidding, which is awfully hard. I don’t know how to get that.

SCHICK DEMANN: Yeah, let me do it.

PATTY: Yeah, I’m going to let you do it, because --

LAINA: Is that your camera? [46:00]

PATTY: It’s Ford’s, but I bought it when I went to China and I bought the wrong one. So all this has to do with the drugs and starving yourself?

SCHICK DEMANN: I think so too.

PATTY: Oh, yeah. Autoimmune disease (inaudible)

LAINA: That’s OK. I have osteoporosis from a doctor that put me on prednisone for over a year for my skin.

END OF AUDIO FILE