

OH 514 DorothyTuohey

JENNIFER SHEA: One second here and I will... This is Jennifer Shea and I'm with Dorothy Tuohey at the Queen Anne Library, the Kent Island branch, and we are collecting her story for the Her Helm Oral History Project at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Oh, I have to tell the date. [laughs] It's August 2nd, 2023. Dorothy, do you want to begin by introducing yourself?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:00:28] My name is Dorothy Tuohey. Birthday is 7/25/60. I've had a license for 45 years. I was the third woman in the United States to get my license, 45 years ago back in 1978. I'm first started on sailboats, '76, '78, I was a captain of the 300-foot-tall ship out of New York Harbor in the parade.

JENNIFER SHEA: How did you get into sailing? Did your family sail?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:01:13] No actually, I was born and raised in Rockville, Potomac, Cabin John area. My family was big into firefighting. My father and grandfathers started up Cabin John Fire Department, Potomac, and two in Rockville. And basically, when we left there, we donated the land, the buildings, all the gear, fire department. My dad's sisters were up in the state house. They fought for

all the benefits for the fire department that they have today. That's Ruth Shupe and Loretta Crook. After my father passed away in... I'm trying to think, in '71, when I was about 11, we moved down towards the Bay. A few years later, I met a guy who was into sailing. That's how I got into sailing. And basically, he worked on vending machines out of Chesapeake Beach. Of course, I lived in North Beach Park; worked with him on his vending machines for a while. He used to take me out sailing with friends, yeah, so we had a boatload. Then I hooked up with the guy and was with him for about 35 years until he passed. Did deliveries, you know, anywhere in the world. I've been around the world twice.

JENNIFER SHEA: In what kind of boats?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:03:19] One was an All Bird 30. The other one was a mega yacht that I used to run. I started with a 40-ton license, now I have a 1,600-ton license. [laughs] And I'm still growing.

JENNIFER SHEA: Wow. So, how did you learn how to sail?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:03:43] I learned from the guy I lived with. Basically, he taught sailing. He worked for Annapolis Sailing School. He also did private, you know, groups; people buy the boats but don't know how to sail and used to hire him. I used to sit on the dock as he's

instructing them at the dock, you do this, and this, and this, and then they'd go take the boat out to show them exactly how it was done, you know. So, and occasionally I would go, and that's how I learned. And we would take boats on boat deliveries, like I said. It was mainly sailboats. I kind of switched over to power boats. We worked for charter boat companies, either in Annapolis or wherever we were, down in Florida, over in Aruba, Virgin Islands, you know, wherever, you know? We didn't actually have a home-home. We lived on 30-foot sailboat, but we're delivering a boat that's up here, we're down there, we just live on any boat that's available at the time. I did a leg of the Volvo Race as a navigator and another leg as a captain.

JENNIFER SHEA: What kind of boat?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:05:12] It was a racing boat, now I don't remember what it is. I have a resume about two inches thick. I've done *Lifestyles*, it's an 83-foot Kelly, charter boat. I've done the tour boats out of Annapolis, I've done the *Lady of Baltimore*, the *Pride of Baltimore*, which are now *Spirit of Baltimore*. I've done the tour boats over...up there, and they're 175 and 100 feet long.

JENNIFER SHEA: What's it like to steer that large a ship?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:05:57] It's just like between a semi and a Volkswagen. [laughs] Yeah...You have to... Well, on a bigger boat, you have to start thinking well ahead what you're going to do, because the boat won't react as quickly as like a small speedboat. And besides delivering, I've done tugboats, I've done many cruise ships, I've done small sailboats, large sailboats. I now do one delivery during the wintertime for the World Banks, and my class is 200 to 400 feet long.

JENNIFER SHEA: Wow. Are you doing that still?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:06:53] Well I turned the last one down. And that was a Russian matraite [?] boat that was parked in Ukraine. I said, "Oh, no."

JENNIFER SHEA: I could see why.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:07:08] I heard whoever took it, I don't know which captain took it, but whoever took it, they did get bombed as it came off the dock. Not a lot, but yeah, I just didn't want... I knew something was going to happen, so I just did not want to get involved with it.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how did you become a boat captain?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:07:30] Well, the guy I dated, and he taught me sailing and everything else, kind of pushed me into being a captain. So, I became captain, got my license at 18, been sailing since I was about 16, so went up and

took my test, I was the third woman in the United States to get my license 45 years ago. And at that time, there was only 5,000 captains. Today, I do know there's about 23 and a half million people out there licensed with a captain, with boating getting so popular now. What else would you like to know?

JENNIFER SHEA: Do you have any favorite stories from delivering any of these boats that would be fun to share?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:08:37] I flew to Costa Rica where they make the Cabo Ricos. Normally, they don't put the boats together down... They...they make the boats down there, but they ship them to the dealers and let them put everything together. Well, the new owners wanted to sail from Cabo Rico up to Maryland with it. So, trying to think of the word. They put...they proceeded to put the mast on, put all the instrumentation on and everything. We met down in Cabo Rico, took it out for a couple sea trials and made sure everything was good. We left out of Cabo Rico, these guys wanted to take this boat around the world, so I was supposed to train them as we're coming up on it, because we're doing an ocean run. And basically, we left out of Costa Rica, we left out of there with both batteries on, I nonchalantly turned one battery off, because you don't run with, or you don't sail with two. And we're sailing along

for about six, eight days. We get up into America...the United States borders. We have already gone through one storm and we're still sailing along. These people are complaining about this and that, and it's like, you know, if you're going to go around the world, you can't sit here and complain here because you're going to drive each other nuts. Yeah. We got up by South Carolina, just south of Carolina, and all the instrumentations went dead. [Laughs] So, I had to teach them plotting, you know, figure out boat speed, figure about where we were on the last position of the navigational equipment, make charts out, make a new plan to head for Charleston Harbor to go in to see what's... you know... get everything fixed. I knew what was going on. The battery was dead. One battery was dead. I didn't tell them about the second one. So, we basically get a course into Charleston. And telling them, we're going to sail this course, and we should see Charleston light just before daybreak, in a 24-hour period. So, we're sailing along. We're taking different shifts here and there. Daybreak comes, nobody sees Charleston light. This guy decides to take off on a different course. I said, "Oh, no, get back on that course, because just because we didn't see it, I may have my speed wrong a little bit and we can be a little bit farther from it." In another three

hours, we saw Charleston lighthouse. And as we're going into Charleston lighthouse, or going into the channel, big channel, because it's got Navy ships there, it's got subs there, it's got you know freighters coming out, tugboats coming out, all kinds of stuff going in and out, I made the owner sail in with all this stuff going in and out. And it's no getting outside the channel, because you've got the rock walls there, or the sea walls. And we get it up by the... We get up by the marina. How we going to dock this? There is current. We don't have an engine. We don't have this. I reached down and put the second battery on, fired up the engines, I said, "We're just going to power in." I got tossed off the boat. [laughs] And they said, "Well, you're going home." I said, "Here this is a good life lesson for you. If you're going around the world, you don't never leave any port with two batteries on, because you're going to run them out. You got to alternate them." They were so pissed off. They sat there for five days wondering whether or not they were going to go around the world because there's a lot of shit that you'd have to learn and, yeah, they were bickering back and forth. I got to the point I just couldn't deal with them anymore.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how did you learn how to do navigation?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:14:08] I worked for Annapolis fishing...

Annapolis Sailing School for a while. He taught celestial navigation. I taught celestial navigation. I got so good with just the books and no sextant that I could find myself with the time of sunset and sunrise. And basically, you can do a sextant with your hands.

JENNIFER SHEA: I didn't know that.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:14:41] I didn't know it, but we were playing around with it. You know, we heard a little bit about it from some old guy that you know, did it. We came within a mile or three quarters of mile from where we were supposed to be. So, if you're three quarters of a mile away and you can't see your location, you know, it's...you shouldn't be out there. [laughs] But we figured it all out. It took us two years to figure out the hand part of it, but we do it, two of us working with it and try to figure it out with the teachings of the sextant and the books and everything else, we got like a little over a mile to three quarter mile to our destination without a sextant.

JENNIFER SHEA: That's great.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:15:45] So, and we were in different parts. We were always traveling around, so we had a different destination doing the sunrise sunset, how far the sunrise was up from the trees, you know. And then you have

little details like rule of thumb, a very important part of navigation. And you actually use your thumb.

JENNIFER SHEA: How so?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:16:13] Well, try it. Put your thumb on one side of that TV. Move your thumb. Close one eye, open up one...the other eye. How far did your thumb move?

JENNIFER SHEA: Oh, yeah.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:16:31] And then it all depends the width of your eyes, how long your arm is, you're near nine and a quarter, nine and a half, nine and three quarters to 10 times that distance off from it. So, if that moved six inches, I'm probably about six feet away.

JENNIFER SHEA: Do you have other sort of those rules, ideas, lessons, Dorothy's lessons?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:17:01] Yeah, you can time sunrise sunset, how far the... If you missed the sunrise, where it clears over the horizon, you can actually figure out where the sun is by your fingers. Put your fingers out like this. Each finger is, like, nine and a half to 10 minutes, seemed like. And you basically go from the horizon to the base of the sun as it goes up. If it's only three fingers, you just add, like, 30 minutes to your time when you do everything on your plotting and your celestial, and you'll come out a couple hundred feet from your destination.

JENNIFER SHEA: Did you ever do any other kind of work or has all your work been on the water?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: Ninety-five percent of it's been on the water. Five percent we were down Florida and couldn't find a boat job, occasionally, we'd work in the arcades off the beach. He used to have a vending business. I would get any type of job that I can find. I did get a job working on a fishing boat for Ocean World off 17th Street in Fort Lauderdale. That's where I got the majority of my time. And it just so happened I saw him about 20 years ago, he was in Annapolis. And this is how small the world is. I'm down in Fort Lauderdale get my time off *Miss Ocean World*, the fishing boat. He's been down there for 25 years. He came up and I was driving it. He looked at me, I looked at him, I said, "Burton? Is that you?" He said, "Yeah, it's me." I said, "What the hell you doing up here?" And come to find out, *Harbor Queen* was built by his brother, he comes up once a year to take the [unclear].

JENNIFER SHEA: On *Harbor Queen*, the...

DOROTHY TUOHEY: Yeah, the tour boat in Annapolis. His brother built it. And basically, *Harbor Queen's* got two right-hand turning props. So, I used to do a lot of charters throughout Annapolis. And one day...one day I had four charters. Now, everybody's like, "Man, you're really

good at maneuvering." I said, well, you figure like, you know, a twin-engine boat, the props go this way. True. But when you put *Lifestyles* in gear, they go the opposite way. And handles completely different." I was on *Lifestyles* in the morning. After that one, I was on *Patricia Divine*, second boat, a replica of an 1812 Square. Then, I was on *Entertainer* later on that day, and late at night I was on *Harbor Queen*. Well, the *Entertainer* had the right...right props going the right way. And when I got on *Harbor Queen*, she's got two right hand turning props, so she maneuvers completely different from everything else that I was driving that day. All the boats handle completely different. And once you can get that pattern down, you know, you should be able to hop from boat to boat to boat to boat.

JENNIFER SHEA: What kind of boat is *Lifestyles*?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: She was an 83-foot Kelly. We did cruises over to the Maritime Museum. The people used to walk around St. Michael's for about three hours, just like with the *Annapolitan II* did. We had corporations, we had booze cruises, we've had weddings on board, we... You know, I can remember one when... September, what 1st, or 11th, when the Towers were bombed?

JENNIFER SHEA: The 11th.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:21:38] We picked up our people at Annapolis City Marina. We had part of the Pentagon people on board with their families. Halfway across the Bay, that's when we started hearing about what was happening with the Twin Towers and everything else. We got in Eastern Bay, still heading out to St. Michael's, trying to figure out, you know... Basically, everybody on board was calling their family friends to get their kids out of school and get them out, you know, of the DC area. And basically, when we got to St. Michael's, that's when we heard the full brunt of what was going on. Now the issue was I had a small child that was at daycare. I'm on the other side of the Bay. They closed the Bay. They closed the roads. They closed everything. Everything. Carpenter Street Saloon over in St. Michael's was open and we had lunch there. Seeing what was on TV, we decided to take the chance and take the boat back to Annapolis with these people on board because they had to get to their families. We were met by the custodies with guns...guns drawn.

[laughs] And basically, I sat there, you know, came down off from the top, steering from the bow, and allowed them to come on. I'm not going to fight them, you know? I said, "We have half of the Pentagon on here, people from the Pentagon." They're like, "Well, the Pentagon and got

bombed." Well, they took a list of everybody's names that they can cancel out who they were missing over in the Pentagon. I said, "We're just trying to get back to Annapolis so they can get their families and everything else." They rode back all the way to Annapolis with us on board with guns. It's like, well, they got... You know. And once we got to the state dock and dropped them off, I said, "We're taking this boat from Annapolis Harbor to the next creek over to Back Creek, to put it away." They rode to Back Creek with us until they got picked up by the Coast Guard boat. But we had guns drawn on us the whole entire time. They thought we were terrorists. But they did have a list of people from the Pentagon that didn't have to search for because it was all the things going on September 11th, nobody could figure out who was actually on that cruise that day. Yeah, so.

JENNIFER SHEA: I was going to ask you if you had any favorite assignments for being the captain of a boat, but that one, that story is very powerful.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:24:55] Well, the boats I do for the World Banks, they're repossessions. So.

JENNIFER SHEA: How does that work?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:25:03] I used to do repossessions in the United States, but the problem is, you have to steal the

boats. You have to wait to the owner gets off it, you have the bank paperwork, you get on, you hotwire the boat, get it out of there. And if you get stopped, you have the paperwork to shows that your bank repo. In repossession offshore, since the boats are document...document vessels, they are what you call an American asset. Yeah. So, basically, we go to courts down in Miami or New York, wherever we're flying out of to which country we're going to. The bank official gets all the documents signed to add to magistrate the office courts. We get all the paperwork to take with us. We get to the country, we go to the magistrate over there, they have a group of armed guards that go with us down to the boat because they have to rouse the other crew off so our crew can get on and take that boat. And we don't have to worry about stealing it, because in the foreign country if you steal it, they'll come after you. So, we have all the paperwork, we've already gone to the magistrate over there. They know what we're doing. And they walk us down to the boat and they rouse everybody off the boat. So, it's a nice, safe switch. We give the crew 10 minutes get their paperwork and get couple bags packed and get off so you can get your stuff on the side, you know? It's like, because we're not

going to leave them in the country without a passport, you know?

JENNIFER SHEA: Wow. That's interesting work, Dorothy.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:27:04] It is interesting. And it pays well. But everybody wants to know how to be a reposessor for the banks. The problem is, I didn't go to them. They came to me.

JENNIFER SHEA: Why? Why did they come to you?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:27:25] When you start driving mega yachts, the owner cannot hire you. The owner can put a list of captains in, but the insurance company does the interviews. These boats, you hit... knock a dock, that's 100,000 real quick, or 300,000, or a half million dollars' damage real quick. You know? They want to make sure whoever takes that helm is capable of operating that vessel. There's a ton of people out there who's got a captain's license that should not have them. So, basically, the insurance company and banks kind of go through and pick out what captains they're going to have for that particular boat, you know, if they're qualified. I ran a boat for 10 years, a mega yacht. I had zero in...damages on it. There's very few captains that get away with zero incidents.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, what makes you so good?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:28:45] I teach single twin...twin engine boat handling skills. I take my time at docking, you know. I ran a cruise boat out of Fort Lauderdale and my test was taking the boat away from the dock, and when I came back to the dock, they said, before you go into the dock, we got to set something off. They set champagne glasses with champagne up on these rails, the boat rails, and they want me to come in the dock and not knock one glass off. You knock a glass off, you don't get the job. That's how meticulous these people were, you know. So, it's like okay, got the boat away. They said, "Now, time to go back in." "Well," I said, "I want to do couple of tests here," counting my bye buoy and seeing exactly how this boat feels, how long it takes to stop, you know. And then I went in, because I had more of a feel for the boat itself, how much reverse I have to give to get it stopped on the forward momentum, this, that, and the other. And basically, I just eased her in there. And these were...these were almost 200-foot-long cruise ships, many cruise ships.

JENNIFER SHEA: What's it like to be the captain of a cruise ship like that?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:30:31] The one I was on was basically the casinos. We went offshore. And there were state

rooms, you know, of course slot machines. Basically, we go out, we're out there all night long, come in next morning, offloaded a group, boat gets cleaned for the day. That night, they reload and go back out again. I go home and go to sleep because I'll be up all night again, you know? You just go off. But there's a crew of like 30, I think I did 38 at the time when I was running it, between the bartenders, the cooks, and the mates, the stewards or the stewardess, we call them stews, the engineer, the assistant engineer, basically, I just kept track with the engineer and the mates because, you know, the operations of the boat is engineers. And if I'm having an issue, I've got to get ahold of them. Mates, go get me coffee, go get me this, you know. Occasionally, I had to put one mates up at the wheel because I had to go use the bathroom. You know, I can't go, you know. So, you know, that's why I was in constant contact with those two groups. Now, the chef would keep ahold of the waitresses, the stews, and everything else, to make sure like the bartenders and everything, they were doing their jobs. It was like split in, like, two or three different... Yeah. So, yes, I was responsible for everybody on board, but it made my job a little bit easier by splitting up like the chef, the chefs, the waitresses, the prep cooks, and stuff, that all pick

one person, you're the headfirst boss, you come and talk to me if you have an issue with one of these. You know? And same thing with like the bartenders, or the stewardess and with the rooms and everything. I can't think right now. [laughs] But you know what I'm talking about? Put one person in charge in that group. Therefore, I have one person to deal with here and one person to deal with here, and we don't have 36 people yelling at each other in meetings.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, what was it like being a female captain? Are there a lot of women on the boats?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:33:34] Like I said, 45 years ago, I was the third woman. The rest them were men. Yeah, it's a man's world. I had worked my way up through the man's world to, you know, get to where I need to be. Everybody kept putting me down like I was no good. I didn't back off. I said, "There's other jobs." [laughs] And I went for them. So, I went from a 40-ton to the 1,600-ton license. And just reputation of handling the boats. At one time in Annapolis Harbor, I was the only captain allowed to... You know, people used to come to me all the time, and asked me to deliver their boats. At one time I had 20 boat deliveries out of Annapolis alone. And I had captains from the tour business come to me and say, "Why

don't you give me a delivery and we'll help you out?" I'm like... You know? [laughs] And they're guys. I said, "Well, you know, one, I don't know what your delivery skills are all about." What do you mean, delivery skills? I tried to give a short delivery to a captain from Annapolis to DC. And that was when he got there, I would drive to DC and find out, did he clean the boat? Did he clean inside, outside, put everything away? You know, it was kind of a test. He refused it. I said, "Fine, there's no deliveries for you, either." You know I didn't want something far off, you know, to find out he left the boat trashed on the other side of, you know. I made sure if the boat works correctly here, it is working correctly there. I've done some deliveries where I've taken a boat that sometimes, some of the stuff that's not working, yeah, I'd fix on the way down. And of course, on the way down, you get issues with like maybe the engine gives you a fit, you know, you get it fixed, go down, and there'd be probably a couple of new issues that the owners don't know about, small stuff. But when I go back and get my check, I have a list of all this stuff that's, fixed this, fixed this, this is fixed, this went down, this went down, you may want to get a mechanic to look at these three items before your vacation time to go down on your boat. Get it fixed

beforehand. People don't want to sit and see a mechanic's ass on their vacation time because this stuff was not told to them earlier. It doesn't cut their vacation time down. And that way I got a lot of repeat customers because when I came back, I had a list, and they know that a few things were iffy when it left, but for them to have a great vacation they need to get it fixed beforehand, or sit there for three or four days waiting for parts and they can't take that boat nowhere, you know? So, we had two weeks to go sail on your boat. You don't want to sit there for a week and then one week, you know, plans go out the window. So.

JENNIFER SHEA: I can see why you were hired. [laughs]

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:37:41] I...I took an extra step so I could, you know, get more jobs.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how did you make the move to running a fishing charter company? What... How did that happen?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:37:56] How did that happen? Well, At WP Nautical, the previous guy who had the fishing boat there, Joe Hershenson, he had to boat *Dancer*.

JENNIFER SHEA: What kind of boat was *Dancer*?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:38:12] *Dancer* was a 1968 wood 37-foot post powerboat, twin engines. He had it inspected as 12 passengers by the Coast Guard. *Dancer* was on pier three.

Entertainer was a 61 hat, inspected for 65. I brought that boat up for the owners a few years prior to that. The owners went down to go pick it up. Problem is, the new owner had a medical issue with his eye, he had come back up. I was working at Annapolis Fishing Charters. The owner's wife was good friends with Melissa, who owned Annapolis Fishing Charters. And Melissa says, "I have a very good captain that will go down and get your boat and bring it up in one piece." And of course, it was me. So, *Entertainer* was at the end. And it wasn't a full-time boat. I only ran occasionally. So, many male captains said, "Well, I can do better than her," and the owner was a captain himself, but he used to ride along to find out well enough if captains were any good. At one time, I was running 13 different charter boats in Annapolis. [laughs] All the same timeframe. Whoever was busy at the top of that could grab me before somebody else grabbed me. I ran a post 42. I ran a 37-foot post fishing boat. I ran a replica 1812. I did *Woodwinds*. I worked for Ed Harmon; he had 13 boats. *Lifestyles*. There was few more. Oh *Fantasy*, the 80-foot off St. Helena's Island, because they used to hold weddings up at St. Helena's. I would have to go up to Smith's, go get the boat, go over St. Helena's, grab the 80-foot *Fantasy*, take it down, pick up the wedding

guests, bring them back to the island, stay at the island, or, you know, if I had another run or not. I had a couple private boats that wanted sailing lessons on their own private boat, or docking lessons, you know, whatever. And I just kept busy. And I worked for Joe for, like, two or three days a week to give his other mates a time off because fishing can be very busy at times. It's a seven-and-a-half months business. And if you're working two trips a day, seven days a week, you don't get time off, you know? So.

JENNIFER SHEA: Now there's quite a... You're an entrepreneur.

Keeping that going that way is quite interesting.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:41:49] Yeah, well. I fish overseas, because on the big boats, it's like anybody want fresh fish? We're going fishing. But you know, I sailed around the world, you know. You get tired of canned stuff, so you go for fresh fish for the day...you know. Yeah. The 157-foot *Carpe Diem* I ran. The owner loved to fish. Now we held the record for the mahi over in Ocean City until about 12 years ago.

JENNIFER SHEA: What was the record?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:42:42] Well, we caught a mahi, I drove the boat 25 years ago. And the record at that time was 69.9 pounds. Now about 12 years, 10, 12 years ago, it was

broken at 70.1. And then about five years ago, it was broken again 71.3, I think it was. But we weren't we were docked at Somers Cove on the geehad [?] since we were so large and all the fishing boats were inside with us, all the way to the dock, because they too, it was one big boat there so. But they were asking me where we caught the mahi at. I said, "Look, I'm in your backyard. You should know where I got this. You know, I'm not going to tell you how to do it here."

JENNIFER SHEA: So, when did you become the owner of Annapolis Fishing Charters?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:43:46] March of 2015. He passed away March 13th, the will says I'd take care of the business throughout the estate, and then I inherited it afterwards. So, I had to take care of the customers, you know, I do everything. I do all my bookings. I take care of the website until this last issue I'm dealing with, which you know, the trademarking. I do majority of the maintenance on board. I got rid of *Dancer* a couple of years ago and bought *Bay Eagle*.

JENNIFER SHEA: What kind of boat is *Bay Eagle*?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:44:29] She's a 46-foot glass boat. She's fiberglass, very low maintenance. I told myself I

would never own another wooden boat, and of course I inherit one. [laughs]

JENNIFER SHEA: So, you inherited it from?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:44:54] Well, the *Bay Eagle* I bought from the proceeds from the other. I looked at the boat in 2016, told them I couldn't buy it, liked it but couldn't buy it. May of 2019, he says, "Well, I dropped the price from 295 to 130. Are you still interested?" "Yeah, I'm still interested, but the bank's not going to give me a bank note for you." So, I gave him a counter, what I had in cash, and he took it.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, *Dancer* had been owned by?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: Joe Richardson. Joe Richardson saw that boat in the 70s at Cove Point Marina. It was sitting at the marina because the owner used to take it out, or the very first owner used to take it out. Problem is, he had engine issues. He never came back for the boat, so the boat's sitting there rotting. But a good engine's in it. He was in there with one of his other boats, he saw the boat, fell in love with it, bought the damn thing, took it up north to Archie's where he worked at, and he rebuilt the boat and turned it into a charter boat.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, what's it like to run a charter? What's involved in that? She says, naively. [laughs]

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:46:37] Basically, people get on board.

Coast Guard requires us to do a safety speech, how everything operates, where, you know, all the safety equipment is, how to do man... Or, what to do when a man overboards. Of course, my inspectors don't like my safety speech, but it gets the point through. Sometimes when you go out fishing, sometimes you catch your fish right away, sometimes in a five-hour period, fish don't start biting until like, you have an hour left on your charter, and then they all start biting. If it's hot out there, a lot of people want to go swimming. And off a COI [Certificate of Inspection] boat, you can't allow anybody to go overboard because then you have to call in DNR [Department of Natural Resources], you got to call the Coast Guard and tell them that you have a man overboard, you've got paperwork to fill out, you know. You know, you've got to cover your butt. And then you got to take a... By allowing them to go over, then you have to, we have what's called alcohol swabs. We've got to take a test of those, you know, we have them on board. So, it's a big issue if we allow somebody to go over. So, basically...basically I tell them, through this little door, head to the left, lifejackets to the right on the lower lockers. There's a fire extinguisher in there, the one behind the bulkhead. I have a station in the back

because when I run it by myself, I can run the lines and run the boat right back there. And they're...it's live at all times. Man overboard, yell at the top of your lungs. If the fishing's good, you get picked up. If the fishing's bad, you become the new bait. And that kind of scares people, sometimes. It's like I said, it could start off slow and then pick up. It could be fast and then come slow, or it comes slow and then it's fast, and then it's slow again. You'd never know when fish are going really bite.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how do you know where to take the boat to find the fish?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:49:00] I work with a small group of captains out there. There's over 400 fishing boat licenses out there. And everybody works in a group. Yeah, I got one that comes out of Baltimore. I got one that comes out of Chester. I got one out of Easton and we come out as we're coming out starting to set up lines, we start calling everybody saying, "Who's catching?" you know? And then if nobody's catching, then kind of stay where we're at, because it's not fruitful for us to run all the way down here, if he ain't catching, you know, we're not going to catch. But as soon as someone starts catching them hot,

they put the word out, they all come to wherever it's, you know.

JENNIFER SHEA: What kind of fish do you tend to look for out here?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:49:54] Mainly we go after striped bass from May 1st to December 9th, and we have the... We just came off a two-week moratorium from July 15th to the July 31st, no targeting rockfish between those two weeks by the Maritime, it's the Atlantic Marine Fishing Commission, they control what and when we can catch that fish. And the two weeks that you can't do the rockfish, normally the blues and the Spanish macks are in, so you can go after that. Or you can go after the bottom fish, which is croakers, perch, and spots. And years ago, when they opened up the Conowingo Dam, all three, five gates out, all that catfish come in, now they're an invasive species. DNR has basically says, if you can get as many charters as you can, you can catch as many catfish as you can. It doesn't matter size, weight, they're just trying to get rid of them, you know. I mean, you can catch a small catfish like that and keep it. Or you can catch the 40 pounders or whatever, you know? But they eat the baby rockfish, and they eat the baby crabs. And everybody's not happy about

that. And we have to take a hit on the moratorium, you know?

JENNIFER SHEA: Yeah. So, now you're going again.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:51:40] Yeah, on rockfish. Yeah.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, are your customers ever surprised to find out that the captain's a woman?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:51:48] Yeah. You read some of the reviews, is, she never gives up until she finds those fish. Yeah. I've heard that fish... You know, it's funny, I heard the fish was up by Hygest [?] one time, which is way up the Bay by Tolchester. On my way up, I found a nice stack of fish. I dropped. We had 15 people on board. We caught 30 fish in 35 minutes. And the largest one was 46 inches long. [laughs] And the smallest one was 24. And in that process, the Coast Guard decided to pull a boat over. We had a line; we were going back and forth on the line. We're going in front of the Coast Guard, in the back of the Coast Guard, they were watching us and we're just pulling these fish in. And I noticed a couple of the guys there because they hold a party at Thomas Point Coast Guard, occasionally, with the family and friends. I've been invited to the pig roast over there a couple times. I said, "You guys got to move. We'll make it worth your time. Just move." You know. Fishermen can be kind of

serious, because when you find yourself a nice, hot line, you know, you want to stay on it. The last pass we needed two fish, we hooked up five. And instead of bringing those last three on board, we went by the Coast Guard boat, we tossed the three into the Coast Guard boat. It didn't come over our rail. So, as long as it didn't come over our rails, we didn't have to, you know. I throw them a bag of ice, I says, "There you go, guys." And they were very appreciative. They weren't out there fishing, they were out there, just, you know. So, they had to keep those fish cold until they got back.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how's the charter business this summer?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:54:07] It's been lousy.

JENNIFER SHEA: Why?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:54:11] They clumped... Everybody wants me out of business. And they cloned my website. They've taken over my emails. They've taken over my phone numbers. They've even taken over my website for a year and a half and grew my business which I've just gotten back in control.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, do you think you're going to continue or are you getting ready for your next adventure?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:54:42] I'm going to... Well, basically, this year has gotten backed up for me. I still have

fishing trips left. The majority of my corporations are calling me that I didn't have through COVID, because they weren't together. Now I'm getting all the corporation, I'm taking those corporations out, they're kind of keep me surviving a little bit. I'm still teaching here and there. I do some other charter boats; I do sailboat charters. And I pissed off my partner... or my competitors, because I'll sail right through the fleet and piss them off, since they are stealing my customers. You know, it's like, you know, they don't know who it is until they see me close up. They have no idea which boat I'm going to sail through that fleet and mess up their fishing. You know?

JENNIFER SHEA: So, is there something in, sort of, this sailing boating world that you want to do next that you haven't done? Because it sounds like you've done a little bit of everything, Dorothy.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:56:44] About, you know, 20 years ago, I tried to be a Bay pilot. But you almost have to be born into the family or marry into the family to become one.

JENNIFER SHEA: Why is that?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:56:59] It's a very close-knit thing. And you get 10 pilots to vote in. For three years in a row, I had nine pilots vote me in. I went around, made friends with them and did some work for them hoping to get

their vote when it came to it. But it's a very high-dollar job. You get paid very well. You work six months out of the year. Six months, that's it.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, what is a Bay pilot?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:57:34] Bay pilot is what... They go on the freighters, the foreign freighters, they bring them up the Bay or down the Bay safely, so they don't hit shoals or anything so they can offload their goods in different parts of the Bay. But normally you'll get sections from like Smith Point, which is Virginia, all the way up to Baltimore, or somewhere from Smith Point to Annapolis where they anchor in Annapolis Harbor, and the pilot boat comes out, picks up the pilot, goes back in, and when this boat decides to go to Baltimore, another pilot gets on and takes him to Baltimore. You know, it's like, and basically the time that you're on, you get paid X number of dollars. But that's the only thing I didn't get a shot on.

JENNIFER SHEA: Yet.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:57:58] Yet.

JENNIFER SHEA: You said you're going to redo your licensing?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:58:03] Renew it for the nighttime. Yes.

JENNIFER SHEA: Wow.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: That means I've already been a captain for 45 years and I'm just going to keep going. I just had a big

medical, you know, big physical done. And they find me completely healthy. And the doctor says, "Can't believe you're 63 years old. You got nothing wrong with you."

JENNIFER SHEA: That's great. That's a wonderful. Yeah, that's wonderful. So, tell me about the Chesapeake and sailing on it. You've sailed all over the world. What makes the Chesapeake a unique place to sail or boat?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [00:58:50] Well there's a lot of little coves. What a lot of people don't know, I don't think even the Maritime Museum knows this, but you take all the lakes, bays, rivers, coves, up the Chesapeake Bay, take the shoreline measurement, it's more than the East and West Coast of the United States put together. And that's a fact a lot of people do not know, that the Chesapeake Bay has enough shoreline to go up and down the East Coast... Up the East Coast and down the West Coast combined. So, it's all these little coves and stuff that you can go in. I found some small coves sailing where there's only one boat that can anchor in there. One boat. I've taken *Lifestyles* into Winchester Cove, which is below the Severn River before it was dredged out. And it was just below the Route 50 bridge on the starboard side going up. The guy who just bought the property that dredged it out asked me, "How big of a boat can I get into that little cove?" So, since

Lifestyles was 83 feet, I went right to the little slip, put 83 and turned around and came back out. He says, "That's good."

JENNIFER SHEA: I wish I could have seen that.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:00:32] Well the problem is, the owner of the boat... The owner of the *Lifestyles* was on board. His wife was on one side, he was on the other side, and they said they saw dry land on either side of the boat as I was going through that. So.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how did you end up in Annapolis?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:00:59] Well, we kept a boat at Breezy Point. Breezy Point got... Well, with the Breezy Point Marina there, you had to wait for the tides to be a certain height, because it had a water cross, and, you know, the sailboats had to wait to when they could get in and when they can get, so they wouldn't take the water. We said, well we got tired of that. The guy decided that he... Since he was working with Annapolis Sailing school, he figured he'd go anchor in Annapolis Harbor before the mooring balls, and he could row or dinghy into his work. And live on his boat. I found a job working in Annapolis Bay Charters before I worked at Annapolis Sailing School. I lived on the boat, too. We'd dinghy in in the morning,

we split wherever we had to go. You know, it's like, we made our life.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how long ago was that?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:02:16] What, before the mooring balls?

Probably early 80s to 90s, and then the mooring balls came in. Or, I should say late 70s, early 80s.

JENNIFER SHEA: Because you really have seen Annapolis grow, haven't you? So, any observations about what's happened in Annapolis? I know for myself I can remember in the early 70s and it's so different.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:02:50] Well, they did a survey back in, I think '84, '85. There was a population of 1 million people in Annapolis. But the population of boats back then were like 3 million with all the rivers, the little coves, like Lake Ogleton in the Back Creek, the Spa Creek, Severn River, and Mill Creek, it was like three million boats. Now it's gotten so popular and it's getting a little dangerous with all the boats in there because it's so congested, especially Ego Alley. I've been named the Queen of Ego Alley, but...

JENNIFER SHEA: Could you explain that? [Laughs]

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:03:51] During the tour boats back in the 80s, since I was head captain, I had to train all these guys to do the big 65-footers, Ed Arvin, great man. Showed

him stuff that he's been on these boats for years and he never knew what some of the stuff was. A lot of captains never showed up for their charters. I'd be on *Harbor Queen* doing 40-minute tours. Ed would come to me and says, "You have a charter tonight." I says, "No, I don't." I said, "I didn't bring my black pants with me." He said, "Yeah, one of the other captains ain't showing up." But I've already been checked out on every single boat. So, it's like I went on a charter with khakis instead of blacks, you know. It's like... You know, so we had a challenge one year who could get all the big boats down Ego Alley, and turn around and come back? And, you know, we had *Providence*, she was 65 with a 15-foot 2,500-pound gangway that was up on cable, so she was... When it was hanging out was no six feet, so she's about 71. *Anna Palm II* was 64 nine, *Harbor Queen* was 64 nine. But she was 33 feet wide. *Cab* was 67 feet, and she drew 13 feet, so you don't, she could only go down there at a certain time, because down there it was, like 13 feet at high tide, and she just made it to get turned. But everybody was scared to take the *Harbor Queen* down. And *Harbor Queen* likes to turn to the right, because she's got two right hand turning props. And I actually turned the *Harbor Queen* to the left down there [laughs] and came out.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, now, where is this, the...

DOROTHY TUOHEY: *Harbor Queen?*

JENNIFER SHEA: No, no, the Alley.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:06:21] Ego Alley? Annapolis Harbor.

JENNIFER SHEA: It's right there? Okay.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:06:24] It's that little strip of water
that goes in by Marriott.

JENNIFER SHEA: I know. Okay, I know exactly where that is.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: Right by the Harbormaster? Everybody
parades up and down thinking that, you know.

JENNIFER SHEA: That's why it's Ego, okay. Got it. Got it. Got
it, got it.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:06:43] Now, I took *Lifestyles* down and
she's 83. I had a bride and groom up on the bow and I've
had people yell at me, "You're going to have to back that
boat out." I said, "I ain't backing this thing out. I'm
going to come out bow first."

JENNIFER SHEA: I want to see. [laughs]

DOROTHY TUOHEY: Now the YPs are 105 feet long. I've taken a
YP down there.

JENNIFER SHEA: What's a YP?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:07:05] A Yard Patrol, out in Naval
Academy. And when the whole alleyway's only 109 feet wide,
and you're turning a 105-foot boat around with no bow

thruster in there, all the boats want to get it in there with you and it's like, no. [Laughs] It's like, stay out, we need as much room as possible turn these Hummers around, you know, it's like...

JENNIFER SHEA: So, what makes you so good, Dorothy?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:07:37] I guess I take pride. Yeah, my competitors ran, I thought... When I inherited *Dancer*, they said, "Oh, you got yourself a big boat." I said, "No, it's a damn tinker toy," because they didn't know my background. I don't say my background too often. And then when I brought *Bay Eagle* they says, "Well, you just moved up. You got a big boat." I said, "No, it's still a tinker toy, just like your boats." And they didn't like that figure of speech on their boats. They don't know I drive 200 to 400 feet. So, you know, my largest boat's been 396 feet.

JENNIFER SHEA: Wow. Wow.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:08:29] And what's another four feet? Not much. You know, so and they're telling me I don't know what I'm doing, I shouldn't be on the water. Basically, they're trying to put me out of business because they want my business.

JENNIFER SHEA: Well, I think they've met somebody here.

[laughs] What would you advise other women who want to become a captain to do? What's your advice for them?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:09:09] Well, I've taught some people who want to be captains who were at the tour business. Some people think by just riding the boat, working the boat as crew never touching the wheel or doing anything else that's when they become captain. I try and encouraged some people who I think will make good captains, but the other ones who want to be captains as having the title as captain, it's... I don't know. I don't know if, you know, sometimes you can pinpoint people who make great chefs or great doctors. Same way in making great captains, you know, just how they handle themselves in situations. There's people... There's people to this day I've had captains come down, "If you ever need a captain for your boat," I said, "No," because 98 percent of the people out there I will not trust taking a dinghy off the creek. When they start the school for captain's license? Anybody could go through it, whether they had boating experience or not, and they got a captain's license. And that's scary. And it's like, you know, I tell some my competitors that harass me, I said, "I guess you got your captain's license out of a school. Back when I got my captain's license, there were no sea

schools." So, you know, you got to study, you got to get your time certified by a captain. You actually had to take the helm, and dock it, and undock it. And here, they only have to take a test, Coast Guard don't do the docking part. That's the most difficult part there is, is docking and undocking. And navigation, you know? It's like, I get kids behind the wheel of the boat because they're out in the middle of the Bay. What are they going to hit if it's not busy out there? Well, they go ahead and we're going only about three to four knots, you know? What are they going to hit? And I have the wheel back there that can control the front one. So, if they get in a near situation, I can always take control back there. So, you know. Kids get a kick out of driving something that big. They think it's big. It's like a toy to me. [laughs]

JENNIFER SHEA: I have a picture to show you later. So, what would you want future captains, especially female captains, to know about you? What do you want your legacy to be?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:12:43] Never give up. If a man tries, or let's say another captain, a male captain tries to put you down, just don't give up. We can do just as much work as a male can do. And basically, I kind of broke through a man's world here being a captain. But I know for years to come, it may start to be changing now, but years to come,

you're still going to get bullied by the male race as a captain is a male's job. I know engineers who are females, they're females and love to work on engines. On the mega yachts, I know a couple of the captains are now females up on there. I was a female captain 20 years ago on a 150 foot. You know. I only kept a crew person there. I didn't keep the engineer, I didn't keep a full crew there. Didn't need it if you're sitting at a dock. Go home, see your families. You may not see your families for nine months when we do go, you know? It's like basically, I gave them time off.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, how have you managed to balance your family with all this life on the water?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:14:31] Well, when my daughter was very small, I was on the mega yacht. And basically, I wasn't quite full-time when she was born, so, but I was doing two months gigs, and I had a great babysitter situation. The weekend babysitters would take her for the weekend, the during the week babysitter, she was retired, so she made sure she got off to school, or... I didn't do too much like the first year of her life, I stayed around. But when she started going to school and stuff, the during the week sitter picked her up Monday afternoon to Friday morning. The weekend sitters picked her up Friday morning and made

sure she made it to school Monday morning, you know? And there was another set of sitters, just in case with the scheduling something happened out of blue, like a family situation they couldn't get to her, they would call the third one, and they'll pick up, you know? I did several deliveries; my daughter has done about four deliveries with me. I took two boats down by ICW [Intracoastal Waterway], the boats were going to Croatia, so I was supposed to place them on a ship and send them over. We stayed in the ICW since there was no insurance on them. Plus, I had my daughter with me. My daughter is more help to me than the crew that I hired. Yeah, one woman, I hired two females. Actually, I hired one female as a mate, and a friend of mine wanted to go down, because she owned a boat, she wanted to see what the ICW was all about. And so, she got to see what it was all about. She never took the helm. She never navigated, she never, you know. That's the way you're going to learn. You got to... I was at the helm for 14 hours a day. So, it was like, you know.

JENNIFER SHEA: So, Dorothy, what gave you the confidence to know you could do this? I mean, it's quite remarkable, everything you've done.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:17:08] I'm not the type to sit down and do, like, paperwork. Here's the thing. Life can be short.

Yeah. The guy I lived with, Tom? He says life can be short, or life can be long. Go see as much as you can, and do what the hell you want, and try to make a living out of it. How many people get in the businesses of doing things of what they like to do? Years ago, you had to be a doctor, a lawyer, receptionist, or, you know. There was no key type where you make a business of something that you'd like to do. So, basically, I fell in love with boats. And I tried to make a living off it, whether it was sailing, tugs, many cruise ships, fishing boats, didn't matter where it was, wherever the money was making at the time. Being a captain, I could go from one industry to the other, no problem. You know, it's like, I had the big enough license to do it. And a lot of these guys only have 50-ton licenses. They can't jump around like I can. And if you want to be a real captain, you should grow your license so you can be able to do other things.

JENNIFER SHEA: Thank you. I have one other question and then...

How did you get connected with the Her Helm Project?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:19:07] Well, she did a couple captains, female captains. She did Emily, off the pirate ship. She's a captain. Melanie [sic] was off *Harbor Queen*. Melanie, I taught her years ago how to be a captain. There was also another female captain that knew about me and

says, "You've got to get ahold of her. She's...she's the queen of the female captains here." So, yeah.

JENNIFER SHEA: Very good.

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:19:43] So, she finally got ahold of me.

It took about three weeks to meet up, but you know.

JENNIFER SHEA: That's wonderful. So, is there anything else you'd like to add to this conversation before we...?

DOROTHY TUOHEY: [01:19:58] For the female captains, you just keep going, yeah. Do what you want to do. Don't be afraid to try different types. If you're a sailor, don't be afraid to try like a power boat, or a tour boat or a charter boat or something like that, once in a great while. I've seen in this industry, if you're on a sailboat charter, they go down, you can't make money. So, you've got to be able to get your name out there by working in different places. So, say that this industry goes up, your sailboat goes down, you jump over there and find something to earn a living of what you like to do. Maybe it's not 100 percent of what you'd like to do, but at least you're earning a living on the water. And that was your key part, anyway, being on the water. So, if you have all these different experiences, then you can jump from industry to industry. A lot of people ask me why I learned so many different types of industries on the water. I said, here

you go. People go to college. They learn, like, civil engineer. There's a lot of different types of civil engineering, then you pick your...your profession. All right, what happens if that engineer goes down? Are you going to get the same amount of money on this other type of civil engineering, or another type of engineering? Have you gotten your toes wet on any of these yet? Because one time during... Any time during your lifetime, where you're working at, the business is going to drop and you're not going to be making as much money as you think. You know, everybody's out to make money for retirement. But to make a decent living, you've got to get your feet wet on every type, whether it's civil engineering, I think there's eight different civil engineering, you've got to get your feet wet. And, you know, make friends in each one. So, if one level of civil engineering goes down, and you can jump somewhere else that you can probably make more money at. And that's what I've done throughout the entire, started with sailboats, and then I did the up sails, did some of the tour boat business, and charter boats, then I did the tug work. You know, I just jumped around to wherever the money was. 2008, the charter... the whole charter service and the tours all went down the tubes. It was in recession. Fishing was there, and the workboats. I worked

the workboats on the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. They're coming in. I guess our time's up.

F1: Hi, I'm so sorry. There's new people coming in.

JENNIFER SHEA: Thank you. I guess we'll have to wrap up here.

Thank you.

END OF AUDIO FILE