My name is Linda Evers and I am 59 years old, my birthday is May 25, 1958. I began my work in uranium in 1976, after I graduated from high school at 18 years old, and my last year was in 1982. I live in Grants, New Mexico in the middle of what is considered the Grants Mineral Belt.

I started on the labor gang on the surface in the mill with the Kerr McGee Corporation. This job is exactly as it sounds, we worked all over the mill site in different areas, wherever extra help was needed, but mostly, it entailed shoveling a lot of ore. However, there were other specific jobs that the labor gang performed such as checking the daily tailings pond levels. This required two of us to board a tiny, flat bottom boat and paddle to the center of the pond and record the level off a measuring device mounted in the middle of the tailings pond. Although it was mostly an uneventful chore, one windy day the boat was caught up in a gust of wind and dumped the two of us into the pond. We swam to shore and drove back to the foreman's office where he instructed us to shower off, in the cold water only locker room, and return to our job. There was no medical attention administered or any concern for radiation over exposure for us workers at all, the main worry seemed to be the loss of the boat.

During shut-down later that same summer, I was assigned to scrape the inside of the acid tanks as they build up a crusty layer of gunk on the inside during the process of making the acid. Acid was produced on-site as part of the leaching process to separate yellowcake from the ore. I was not provided any special equipment for this job, I just had my regular equipment of steel-toed boots, hard hat, safety glasses and leather gloves. I was instructed to scrape on the inside of the tank until it was smooth again. It was August, the black tank was in full sunlight, and there was one hole on each end of the tank to crawl in and out of. I had been working and sweating for about an hour when I crawled out to get some fresh air and stand up straight for a minute. I was

chewed out for not doing the job as directed, written up within an hour, and threatened with job loss if I couldn't do the work. The rest of the day I just stuck my head out of the hole at the end of the tank to breath fresh air so I wouldn't get fired. I had to do that job for a week before they changed out the workers, and a month later they decided that a new tank was needed anyway. I had to replace my work clothes after that job because they just rotted away.

Over the winter I was assigned to the yellowcake area to help with the cleaning. One job required a crane lift to remove yellowcake filters from the filter tank and clean them off into a holding tank. The operator I was working with didn't seem to get the clamps positioned properly and as I was guiding the filter as he ran the lift, the filter dropped and crushed my toes under the steel of my steel-toed boots. I was not taken to the doctor because the foreman did not want an "on the job accident" on his record. He cut my boot off, iced my foot, and after I clocked out then the foreman drove me into town to the hospital. The company paid for the hospital bill, but I had to clock in the next day and help the foreman with his paperwork, so we didn't have a "lost time accident" on the record either. I had 2 broken toes and one smashed toe.

Soon after that incident, I was assigned to the crusher department as a third-class operator. The crusher began the process of yellowcake production. I worked in the beginning of this process by running the raw ore through the primary jaw crusher. Ore from the mines first went through the primary jaw crusher where it was reduced to 4" or less in diameter, then on conveyor belts it was moved to the secondary impact crushers where it was reduced to less than one inch. Throughout the conveyor belt system there were several stations for workers to pick trash out of the ore and a giant magnet at the end that had to be dumped regularly. The ore then could be conveyed to the rod mill where water and chemicals were added to begin the process of leaching the yellowcake from the ore. This is a very dusty job, there was one small fan that most of the

time didn't work, and when it did, it pulled air in from the outside, basically, making a small, continual dust devil in the room. We were allowed one paper mask that was useless after an hour or so because it was plugged with dirt, so I used a bandana that wasn't much better.

In August of 1978 I informed my foreman that I was pregnant, and he sent me to human resources to find out what needed to be done. I filled out paperwork for time off in May when the baby was due and was told that I could continue working since there were no complications with the pregnancy. With the baby and me healthy, they expected me to do my assigned job until the baby came. My son was born with a birth defect that, according to the doctor that did the surgery to fix him, was caused by over exposure to radiation. When I questioned my primary doctor about that comment made by the surgeon, he explained that could not have possibly been the problem as the defect was a common one in a percentage of all pregnancies. It should be noted that my primary doctor was also the uranium company's doctor. I returned to work after 6 weeks and in the summer of 1981 informed the foreman again of my second pregnancy with the same results. My daughter was born with defects that could not be repaired with a simple surgery. She had to have 5 surgeries before she was 4 years old to build the hips she was born without. The professional medical people that were responsible for her surgeries and recovery convinced me that over exposure to radiation was the cause of her birth defect and I quit working in uranium that day.

Fast forward to 1993 when I was 35 years old. While living and working in Kansas City, Kansas, I dislocated my right thumb at work and went to a hand specialist in Olathe, Kansas because he was reported to be the best doctor with hands. He was reviewing the X-rays with me and discussing the options for repair when he asked me out of the blue when had I been over exposed to radiation. This question took me by surprise because I had not been in radiation since 1982.

He said that I had no joint to repair that the thumb joint had worn out until it was completely gone, there was no joint to relocate. Further research showed that my bones were deteriorated to a degree that was mostly seen only in elderly people. The surgeon had not seen that rate of deterioration in a person so young without some sort of cause. After months of testing the results showed that my bone deterioration was directly correlated to my over exposure to radiation while working in the uranium industry in New Mexico. The doctors also discovered that I had arthritis conditions, regular, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. I became disabled due to these and other illnesses and diseases at 35 years old.

As I age, many other issues have manifested. I have pulmonary fibrosis, many joints have had to be fused or replaced, while many more joints, such as my hips, are failing. I have severe obstructive sleep apnea, and I'm losing my eyesight and hearing at a rapid rate. I have cancerous growths removed every 2-3 years from my skin everywhere on my body, sometimes they need removed from inside my body as well. I have several different types of skin rashes that cause my skin to break open and bleed on a regular basis. The rashes form as numerous small blisters, itch and then break open, and finally, my skin turns hard and peels off in large chunks. This happens to my hands 4-5 times a year. The rashes on my body and legs differ from each other and are just as painful.

My story is only one of many horror stories from uranium workers around the country. I ask that you support the RECA Amendments, (Radiation Exposure Compensation Act), to help get justice for the Post '71 uranium workers that have been ignored for so many years. Support Senate Bill #197 and House Bill #2049.

Thank you,

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